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THE  
COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

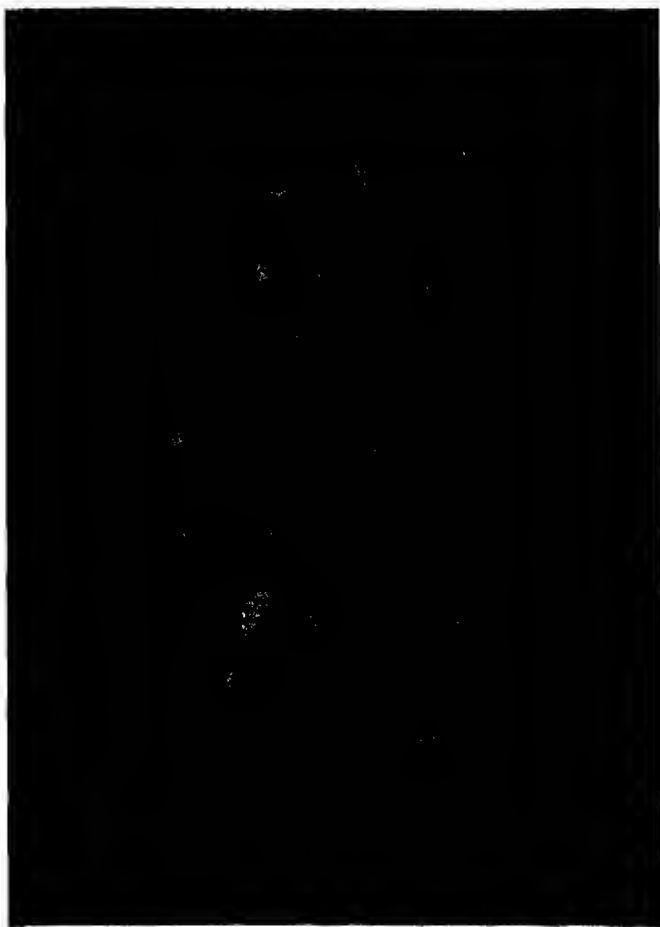


"The Poet in a golden clime was born,  
With golden stars above  
Dowered with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn  
The love of love  
TENNYSON

\* At the Round Table of King Arthur there was left always one seat vacant for him who should accomplish the adventure of the Holy Grail. It was called the 'perilous seat' because of the dangers he must encounter who would win it. In the company of the Epic poets there was a place left for whoever should embody the Christian idea of a triumphant life outwardly all defeat inwardly victorious, who should make us partakers of that cup of sorrow in which all are communicants with Christ. He who should do this would indeed achieve the 'perilous seat, for he must combine poesy with doctrine in such cunning wise, that one lose not its beauty nor the other its severity—and Dante has done it.

J R LOWELL





*White*

The inside of a *P. viridis* by *Smith* discovered in 1841, the *Emys pallasi* *Thomson*,  
is from a drawing by *Longman* which they made previously to the extinction of the species  
and now the property of the *St. James* *Lord* *Thomson*

England, to preserve from the *St. James* *Lord* *Thomson* by the *St. James* *Lord* *Thomson*

*Thomson* *St. James* *Lord* *Thomson*

THE  
COMMEDIA AND CANZONIERE  
OF  
DANTE ALIGHIERI

A NEW TRANSLATION

With Notes Essays and a Biographical Introduction

By E. H. PLUMPTRE D.D.

DEAN OF WELLS

"Ergo vivida vis anima pervicit, et extra  
Processit longe flammarum moenia mundi"  
*Lucret* i 72

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I.

LONDON  
WM. ISBISTER LIMITED  
56 LUDGATE HILL  
1886



## Dedication Sonnets

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### I.

### HELL

---

TO

THE VERY REV. R. W. CHURCH, D.C.L.,

DEAN OF ST PAUL'S

---

THINE was the hand first led me to the page  
Of the much vext, much conquering Florentine,  
And taught me in that Comedy Divine  
To find the man, the prophet, and the sage ;  
And now, as manhood passes into age,  
The struggle and the blessing have been mine  
To follow step by step, and line by line,  
The course of that transcendent pilgrimage.  
The forest wild, foul stream, and drear abyss,  
The sunlit ocean, and the mountain fair,  
The wondrous circles of the souls in bliss,  
Where light and music tremble in the air .  
These lie before thee. Seems it overbold  
This newest way to pay that debt of old ?

SAN REMO,  
*January 12th, 1883.*

## II.

### PURGATORY

---

TO

THE RIGHT HON. W. E. GLADSTONE, M P.

---

"In the school of Dante I have learnt a great part of that mental provision, however insignificant it be, which has served me to make the journey of life up to the term of nearly seventy-three years."—W. E. GLADSTONE.

---

Nor thine the exile's weary lot, to tread  
The stairs of others as with bleeding feet,  
Nor yet in lonely wanderings still to eat  
The doled-out bitter gifts of others' bread  
Thine rather is it to have nobly led  
When others halted or would fain retreat,  
To steer the State, though fierce the storm-winds beat,  
On to the wished-for haven, sails full spread  
Unlike in outward fortunes, yet we trace  
In thee and in our Dante many a line  
Of inward likeness, sharing each the grace  
Of Life's stern, loving, changeful discipline,  
The will that stands four-square to Fortune's blows,  
Thoughts that age ripens, hope that wider grows.

ROME,  
*February 5th, 1883.*

III.

*PARADISE*

---

TO

H. R. I. H.

THE CROWN PRINCESS OF GERMANY AND PRUSSIA,  
AND PRINCESS ROYAL OF ENGLAND.

---

*BY PERMISSION*

---

THOU, too, loved daughter of our England's Queen,  
Hast found thy place among the goodly band  
Of those who read, and mark, and understand  
What Dante wrote, what was by Dante seen.  
Thou from his song hast learnt the mind serene;  
Which can life's varied chance and change command,  
And, through the snares which lie on either hand,  
Still on the guiding Staff and Arm canst lean.  
I will not doubt that thou wilt welcome give  
To this my work, late fruit of many years,  
Work that has taught me truer life to live,  
Has strengthened hope, and purified my fears;  
And if from thee I win one smile of praise,  
Full guerdon will it be for toilsome days.

WELLS,  
Sept. 1st, 1885





## PREFACE.

---

THE history of the work which is now published may be briefly told. It is about thirty years since I was first led, chiefly by the profoundly interesting and as yet unsurpassed essay on Dante by the present Dean of St. Paul's, to a careful study of the *Divina Commedia*. As Sainte-Beuve has truly said, such a study leads, almost inevitably, to the feeling that the great poem has not hitherto been adequately translated—to the wish, if it be possible, to meet the deficiency by yet another translation, which, whatever may be its defects, may at least be more adequate than its predecessors. My own case did not prove an exception to the law thus formulated. The only versions which could then be said to be in possession of the field were Cary's, Pollock's, and Longfellow's; and these, though distinguished each of them by special merits of its own, were alike in this, that they made no attempt to reproduce the form of the original, and were content to accept blank verse—in Longfellow's case an eleven-syllabled blank verse—as the nearest equivalent to Dante's *terza rima*. I was impressed with the belief that, if absolute identity of form is impossible—and in this case the different genius of Italian and English as regards their word-endings seemed decisive against such an identity—it was, at least, the duty and the wisdom of a translator to aim at the nearest possible

analogue which the nature of the English language admitted. The comparative ease of blank verse is, of course, a great temptation, but, for that very reason, it fails to give the reader the sense of strength and mastery over language as the original gives it, and we lose altogether the impression made by the interlinked, interwoven continuity with which line follows on line and thought on thought throughout a whole canto. Little, I imagine, can be said in favour of other metrical forms, such as the six-lined stanza of Mr. Boyd's version, or the peculiar arrangement of double, not triple, rhyme, by which that of Mr I. C. Wright cheats the eye, though not the ear, of the reader with a counterfeit semblance of the original. And I confess I have seldom found satisfaction in any prose version of a poem in any language. It may be in the highest degree useful to the student of the original, and that merit belongs conspicuously to such works as Dr. Carlyle's translation of the *Inferno* and Mr. A. J. Butler's of the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*; but the English reader in these instances, I imagine—and I might add to them Mr. Munro's *Lucretius* and Mr Lonsdale's *Virgil*—finds it hard to persuade himself that he is reading a poem. Music, the melody of rhythm and of rhyme, of assonance or alliteration, of subtle laws of parallelism or contrast, is, according to the varying character of nations and their tongues, Aryan or Semitic, Greek, Latin, Spanish, Italian, Early English, absolutely the *differentia* of poetry. To fall back upon a prose version, except in the case of Hebrew poetry, where the music of the original is simply that of a balanced symmetry, is to confess either that all poetry as such is untranslatable, or that this or that particular poem presents absolutely insuperable difficulties. The result is, at the best, like drinking stale

champagne, like looking on the moving forms of a complicated dance without hearing the music which guides and regulates them. Read a chorus of Sophocles or an ode of Pindar in a "crib," and see what you think of it.

With these convictions, then, and yielding, as I had done before in another region, to the translating impulse, I entered on the task in the hope that I should find the difficulty of reproducing the triple rhyme of the *Commedia*, without unduly sacrificing faithfulness, not altogether insuperable. I was ignorant at the time that I had three predecessors, in C B Cayley (1851), Mrs. Ramsay (1862), and the Rev C Dayman (1865), who had thus translated the whole of the *Commedia*, while portions had been rendered in the same form by Mr. Hayley, Lord Byron, O Volpi (1836), Thomas Brooksbank (1854), and Rev. J. W. Thomas (1859). It was, I think, in 1867 that I showed the first fruits of my labours to some competent Italian scholars, Edoardo Fusco, Antonio Biaggi, and John Hullah, and what they said encouraged me to persevere. And so, as more than twenty years passed on, interrupted often by long intervals, during which my time was occupied with other labours, the work has grown to completeness. I do not regret those interruptions, partly because at the end of each interval I came back to my work with a certain freshness which enabled me to criticise it more or less from the position of an outsider; partly because the labours themselves which had seemed hindrances I found to be really helps, and I learned that in writing comments on Isaiah and Jeremiah I had been training myself to enter more fully into the mind and heart of Dante, that the study of the eschatology of the early and mediæval Church was

not a bad preparation for that of Dante's vision of the world behind the veil.

I heard from time to time that others were anticipating me. Versions of the whole or part of the *Commedia* in triple rhyme appeared, and met with at least a partial acceptance, by Rev. James Ford (1870), E. R. Ellaby (1874), C. Tomlinson (1877), Warburton Pike (1881), J. R. Sibbald (1884), J. T. Minchin (1885). Of these I know little or nothing beyond the fact that I have, within the last few months, transcribed from them, as from all other English versions to which I could gain access, the rendering of the dread inscription of *H. III.* 1-9. But did I know more, it would, I feel, be at once unbecoming and unwise to express any opinion on their merits. There can, I believe, be no worse introduction to a translator's work than that he should sit in judgment on the labours of his predecessors. It may be easy to point to this faulty rhyme and that obscure construction, to meanings imperfectly apprehended and special beauties turned into commonplace mediocrities, but then there comes the thought, common alike to Horace and St. Paul, "*Mutato nomine, de te fabula narratur*," "Thou that judgest doest the same things." I have no doubt that each of these versions has, like my own, its special merits and defects. I hope and believe that each of the translators has found in his work, as I have found in mine, its own best reward. Each, perhaps, has had the added comfort of a small select circle of sympathising friends.

But it is, at any rate, true of each and all of these versions, that not one of them can be said to be in possession of the field. Practically, as far as circulation goes, Cary is still, I take it, ahead of all competitors,

followed, though not *longissimo intervallo*, by Longfellow; and with these the idea of direct comparison and competition was excluded by the fact that I have deliberately chosen another form than that which they had adopted; and there still seemed, therefore, to be an opening for an attempt which might, indeed, prove unsuccessful, but which aimed at what I take to be a higher ideal than they aimed at.

Accordingly, in 1883 I printed—I can scarcely say published—the first four cantos of the *Inferno*, with the episodes of Francesca and Ugolino, and sent them to such Dante experts and masters of English style as I had the good fortune to know; among them, to Cardinal Newman, Mr. Gladstone, Sir James Lacata, the Bishop of Ripon, Dean Church, Archdeacon Farrar, Canon Liddon, Mr. J. A. Symonds, Mr. J. G. Whittier, Dr. Edward Moore, the present Barlow Lecturer on Dante at University College, London, the Rev. H. F. Tozer, Mr A. J. Butler, and others. The answers which I received varied much, as might be expected, in their character. Some thought 'that I was aiming at the unattainable; that Dante must remain for all time, if not unknown and unknowable, at all events the untranslated, the untranslatable. On the whole, however, there was a balance in favour of completing what I had begun, and I was encouraged to go over my work again with a view to that completion.

The *Commedia* was thus finished, but then there came the question, Ought I to stop there? I do not expect that Dante's Minor Poems will ever be very attractive to the average English reader. They are the product of a form of culture and of life with which the English mind has little or no sympathy. They belong to Italy and to the Italians of the thirteenth century, not, like the *Commedia*,

to the world and to mankind. Yet none the less it seemed clear to me that Dante could not be understood as a man or as a poet without them; that many parts of the *Commedia* are as a sealed book to those who have no adequate knowledge of the poems of the *Vita Nuova* or the *Convito*. They represent the Dante of the Bargello portrait in its tender dreaminess, its latent promise and potency of a higher life, as the completed *Commedia* represents the face, worn and furrowed, with its knitted brow and compressed lips, of the plaster cast of Ravenna. In this region I found myself, when I had come to the conclusion that the Minor Poems should accompany the great universe-poem of which they were the forerunners, with far fewer competitors. The *Vita Nuova* and its poems had indeed been translated by Sir Theodore Martin (1862), Mr D. G. Rossetti (1861), Mr. Garrow (1846), Mr Norton (1867). Some of the other poems had appeared in Mr. Rossetti's *Dante and his Circle* (1874). A few might be found here and there in periodicals. So far as I know, however, the only complete translation into English was that of Mr. Charles Lyell (1845), and he had deliberately renounced the attempt to reproduce them in anything like the form of the original. To me this seemed a more serious defect in connexion with the Minor Poems than it had been even in connexion with the *Commedia*. Whatever charm there may be in the outward form of a *sonnet*, a *canzone*, or a *ballata*, depends, in large measure, on the recurrence of the rhyming syllables under fixed and complicated laws. Omit the rhyme, and the melody has vanished and the charm is nowhere, and you lose altogether the sense of sympathy with the poet's exulting joy in his own mastery over the instruments with which he has to deal. Here again I made my choice

as before. If the Minor Poems were to be translated, they ought to appear, each of them, in the nearest analogue which the English language permitted to that of the original. How far I have succeeded in either case I leave others to judge. I am not conscious that the difficulty of the task has led me to take refuge in loose paraphrases or otherwise unfaithful renderings. I do not wish, and indeed I have no right, to plead that difficulty as an extenuating circumstance, should I be found guilty. I am bound to acknowledge the help which I have received in guarding against such defects from the friendly criticisms of Mr J. Allanson Picton, M P, and the Rev H. W Pereira. Often also I have had to thank them for what seem to me singularly felicitous suggestions.

I have followed for the most part, in the *Commedia*, the text which I found in Scartazzini's edition (1874-82), but have here and there, guided by it and by Mr. Barlow's *Contributions to the Study of the Divine Commedia*, noticed such various readings as materially affected the meaning of the original. In the Minor Poems I have adopted the order and followed the text of Fraticelli's edition (1873). I have not aimed—it would not, I think, have been expedient to aim, even if I had had leisure and opportunity for so colossal a work—at anything of the nature of a critical revision of the text.

In regard to notes, I stand on somewhat firmer ground. My work in life has been largely that of a commentator, endeavouring to make the words of the writers of the Bible living and intelligible things to the average English reader, and experience has, I think, taught me what the average English reader wants. To have done this for the poet-prophets of Israel, for Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, was, I



found, at least something of a discipline for the same task in dealing with the prophet-poet of Florence, whose mind and character were, in many ways, analogous to theirs. I have tried to give enough, and not more than enough, of the historical, biographical, geographical materials which are necessary for the explanation of Dante's allusive references. I have sought to put myself in his place, to read the books he read, to see things as he saw them, to think his thoughts. I have acted in the belief that he is his own best interpreter, and have endeavoured to read the *Commedia* in the light thrown upon it by the Minor Poems, and the Minor Poems in the light thrown upon them by the *Commedia*; to trace in both the workings of the mind which wrote the *Vita Nuova*, the *De Monarchia*, the *De Vulgari Eloquentia*, and the *Convito*. If I do not altogether adopt the descriptions which have been given of him as "the Homer of Catholicism" (*Ozan.*), or as turning Aquinas into *terza rima*, I have not forgotten that he was essentially the poet of the dominant beliefs of Latin Christendom; that his mind was permeated with the formulated theology in which those beliefs were embodied; that even in his struggles after another ecclesiastical polity than that of Ultramontanism, after a wider hope than that of Augustine, he was, as it were, vainly fluttering against the bars of the Church's dogmatic system, and bruising his wings in his efforts after freedom. Of the sources which I have found richest in materials for this work, I would name the exhaustive—almost oppressively exhaustive—commentary of Scartazzini; that by Lubin (1881), and that published by King John of Saxony under the *nom de plume* of *Philalethes* (1865); the *Dante-Forschungen* of Witte, the great "master of those who know" among Dante experts (1879), and the valuable notes and essays in the four volumes of the

*Transactions* of the *Deutsche Dante-Gesellschaft* (1867-1877); the *Ethics* of Aristotle, and the *Summa Theologica* of Aquinas. Scarcely less helpful than these have I found the *Breviary* and the *Missal* of the Latin Church. These, at all events, were the poet's daily companions, I might almost say his daily bread, as much as—one would hope more than—his Virgil, his Ovid, or his Lucan, and through them, especially in the *Purgatorio*, we gain an access to the sequence of his thoughts, to his parables and dark sayings, from which we should otherwise be excluded. Villani's *Chronicles* and the works which bear the names of Ricordano Malispini and Dino Compagni have, I need scarcely say, been helpful at every turn. Scarcely less so, in its bearing on the great episode of Dante's life, which furnishes, especially in the *Purgatorio* and *Paradiso*, the key to much that would otherwise be obscure, is the stately volume published by Dr George Irmer under the direction of the Prussian Government, *Die Romfahrt Kaiser Heinrich's VII.* Among works which have not been accessible to most, if to any, of my predecessors, having only within the last twelve months come into the possession of the British Museum, I may name the MS. commentary of Giovanni da Serravalle, Bishop of Fermo, on the Latin translation of the *Commedia* which he made during the sessions of the Council of Constance at the request of two English Bishops (Bubwith of Bath and Wells, and Hallam of Salisbury); that (also in MS) on the *Inferno* by Giovanni Pisano, the latter having the interest of having been written before 1333, within twelve years after Dante's death, and that of Castelvetro, published for the first time in 1885. For the *Paradiso* I hope to be able to avail myself of the commentary of Ricaldone, announced as about to be published by the King of Italy.

I have thought it desirable to give a *Life* of the poet by way of introduction to his poems. Even in the case of writers like Homer, Shakespeare, Chaucer, whose works are pre-eminently dramatic, external, objective in their character, we should, I believe, be gainers if we knew more of what the men were in themselves, how they were trained as poets, how far their poems reflect the internal workings of their minds or the influence of their environment. But Dante, like Milton, and even in a yet higher measure, belongs to the order of poets whose writings are emphatically autobiographical, who speak out of the fulness of their heart, who find relief in utterance, who thus make known to others the bitterness or the joy with which otherwise "a stranger doth not intermeddle." It will be seen that, in writing that *Life*, I have availed myself freely of the labours of many of those who have preceded me, notably of those of Fraticelli, Wegele, Lubin, Bartoli, and Scartazzini, in addition to works which I have already named in connexion with my notes. It will be seen also that I have not confined myself to those labours, but have drawn many inferences from Dante's writings, some of them, if I mistake not, scarcely noticed hitherto, from undesigned coincidences between those writings and the literature, historical or poetical, of Dante's contemporaries. If, in some instances, I have been led to conclusions which at first may seem strange and startling to those who have rested in the Dante of tradition, I can only submit the evidence on which those conclusions rest to the judgment of candid inquirers, and am content, if not to accept their decision as final, at least, whatever it may be, not to murmur at it.

In my labours as commentator and biographer, I have to acknowledge that I have been as much helped as in those of

which the translation itself is the outcome. Mr. Pereira, as before, and Colonel and Mrs. Gillum, deserve my best thanks for the care which they have taken in correcting errors of the press and verifying references, as the notes were passing from their first proof to their final revise. I have to add to their names, as far as the Life is concerned, those of Dean Church, Archdeacon Farrar, Archdeacon Stead, and Canon Creighton, to whose friendly encouragement, as the sheets were passing through the printer's hands, I am largely indebted. Lastly, there are many other friends to whom I owe information, not unimportant, on isolated points, which I ought not to leave unacknowledged, among whom I am bound to name Lord Grimthorpe, Bishop Hobhouse, Sir Frederick Pollock, Professor Max Muller, Canon Church, Dr. C. D. Ginsburg, J. K. Spender, M.D., C. E. Maurice, Francis Badham, Paget Toynbee, Mr. H. M. Thompson and Mr. G. K. Fortescue of the British Museum, Mr. F. Norgate, and Mr. J. Taylor of the Bristol Museum and Library.

I had originally intended to publish the work, as advertised, complete in its two octavo volumes. My publishers, however, on grounds which, as seen from their point of view, are, I am compelled to own, of sufficient weight, demur to this arrangement. They know more of the *mollia tempora*, the favourable or unfavourable seasons, of publication, than I do, and plead strongly for not waiting till the early winter, when the market is flooded with the annual rush of Christmas works, and the general reader and reviewer have no leisure for works of a graver character and higher aims. And so I send forth the first instalment of my work separately, leaving the *Paradise* and the *Minor Poems* for the second volume, to be published, it may be hoped,

next spring. To these I propose adding a few "Studies" on some of the points which could not conveniently be dealt with in the Notes or in the Life, such, *e.g.*, as—

1. The *Genesis* and Growth of the *Commedia* ;
2. Dante's Prose Writings ;
3. Dante as an Interpreter of Scripture ,
4. Dante as an Observer of Nature ,
5. Estimates, Contemporary and Later ;
6. Dante's Influence on Literature and Art ;
7. Translations of Dante ;

and such other topics as may suggest themselves.

E. H. P.

October 13, 1886.

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NOTE—I may mention, in addition to the "triple-rhyme" versions of Dante already named as specimen translations by men more or less conspicuous, Mr Hayley's version of part of the *Inferno*, Lord Byron's of the Francesca episode, and one, of great merit, of the *Inferno*, c. 1, by Sir J. F. W. Herschel, published in the *Cornhill Magazine* for July 1868. Those who like to think of the literary studies of our leading statesmen may be glad to know that the Francesca story was also translated by Lord John Russell in the *Literary Souvenir* for 1834 (this, however, was in ordinary heroic couplets), that of Ugolino, the paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer in *Purg.* xi. 1-21, and the speech of Piccarda in *Par.* iii. 70-87 (all in triple rhyme), by the Right Hon. W. E. Gladstone in 1835. The latter are to be found in *Translations* by Lord Lyttelton and Mr Gladstone, published (second edition) in 1863.

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ERRATA.

- Page xlii, last line of note, for "37 n.," read "xlv n"  
 " lvi, first " " " "35 n.," " "xlii n."  
 " lxi, " " " "καλύμμα," read "καλυμμα."  
 " xcix, last " " " "Malasp," read "Malasp."  
 " civ, third " " " "lxv," read "lxxiii"  
 " " seventh " " " "xlii, lxi," read "l, lxix."  
 " cxvi, line 20, for "Arragon," read "Aragon"  
 " cxxi, " 17, ditto ditto  
 " cxxv, " 2, for "lxxviii," read "lxxxvi"  
 " 15, note on line 46, for "mind," read "minds"  
 " 167, line 32, for "Guarlandi," read "Gualandi"  
 " 199, heading of Canto V, for "*Buon Conte*," read "*Buonconte*"  
 " 252, line 8, for "Pettiguan," read "Pettinagno"  
 " 253, heading of Canto XIV, for "*da*," read "*de*"  
 " 274, for note on line 32, read—  
 "The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,  
 And these are of them"—*Marbeth* : 3

# LIFE OF DANTE.



## LIFE OF DANTE.

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THE writer of a Life of Dante has before him a task of no ordinary difficulty. The actual facts resting on contemporary documentary evidence are but few and meagre. They form hardly more than the skeleton of a biography. Traditions, anecdotes, one might almost say legends, inferences more or less hypothetical from his writings, are wanted to clothe the skeleton, first with the flesh and blood of a living man, and then with garments of the form and fashion of his time. These exist, it is true, in sufficient abundance, and have furnished the raw materials for most of the compilations which pass current as Lives of Dante. They have been worked up by different writers in ways that vary with their characters. Easy-going gossiping novelists like Boccaccio take what comes ready to their hands, and present a narrative, if not absolutely veracious, yet light and entertaining as a chapter in the *Decameron*. Omnivorous collectors like Balbo and Pelli bring together a vast mass of traditions and conjectures, "things new and old," to which others may resort for compilation on a smaller scale, and to which most later writers are more or less indebted. Men with the enthusiasm of a dominant idea, like Ozanam and Rossetti and Aroux, construct (in the instances I have named, from very opposite standpoints) an ideal Dante out of their inner consciousness, likely enough to mislead the unwary, yet not without a touch of inventive genius from which the wary may at least learn something. Critics of a less credulous or imaginative type, like Filelfo and Bartoli, come in to destroy what others have thus built up, subject traditions and conjectures to the ruthless analysis of an ultra-Straussian scepticism, prove to their own satisfaction that after all we have nothing but the bones of the skeleton, and that they are very dry. Lastly, here, as in other regions of literature, Père Hardouin meets us as out-paradoxing all paradoxes, and maintaining that Dante's name and writings are but a simulacrum in literature, and that the *Commedia* was the work of a follower of



Wyklyf in the fifteenth century. If, as he used to say, he didn't get up at three o'clock in the morning to repeat what had been said before him, "verily he has his reward." Of him it may be enough to say, *Guarda e passa*. Happily Dante literature has not been without its workers of a higher stamp, who have set themselves to build up as well as to destroy, to sweep away the chaff in order that they may gather the wheat into their garner. In Italian writers like Scartazzini and Fraticelli, in Germans like Wegele and Witta, in English writers such as Maria Rossetti, Mrs. Oliphant, and Mr J. A. Symonds, and above all in Dean Church and J. R. Lowell, whose *Essays on Dante* stand as the most masterly studies in our own or any other language, I recognise the Masters of Israel at whose feet I have been glad to sit, and whose teaching, while reserving the right of an independent judgment, I have often been glad to follow.

The result of all this confluence of heterogeneous material and discordant workmanship is, that the writer of a *Life of Dante* must be prepared for controversies at every step, and those controversies spread over a singularly voluminous literature. How was his name spelt, and what was its meaning? Where and when was he born? Was he of a noble or plebeian house? Was Brunetto Latini his schoolmaster or tutor? Did he study in the Universities of Bologna, Paris, Oxford, in early life, or only after his exile, or not at all? Did he really fall in love with Beatrice at the age of nine? Was she married when he wrote his first sonnet or afterwards, or not at all? Did she return his affection and die with his name upon her lips, or treat him with a cool indifference? Who was the lady whom he pretended to love, and who the "*donna gentile*" that pitied him after Beatrice's death? Or was there ever a flesh and blood Beatrice? Can we see in her more than the creation of the poet's brain? and if so, was she simply an ideal of womanhood, or the symbol of Catholic dogma or Ghibelline politics, or of one of the Gnostic, Manichæan, Pantheistic heresies which were imputed to the Albigenses? And what were Dante's own religious convictions? Was he a devout Catholic, or an infidel wearing the mask of Catholicism? Or did he pass through a phase of scepticism, returning to the true faith at last? Was he pure, or at least decent, in his home-life, or conspicuously licentious? Was his Ghibellinism the cause or the consequence of his exile? Was his married life happy or unhappy, and if the latter,

was the fault his or his wife's? How many children had he, and what were their names? Did he visit Rome before he went as envoy from Florence, or did he never go there at all? Did he write the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* before his exile? and if so, in Latin or Italian? And when did he finish that and the other portions of the *Commedia*, and when did he publish them, if he published them at all? Did he borrow the plan of the *Commedia* from the boy-visions of Alberic of Monte-Cassino, or from that of the Monk of Melrose, as told by Beda, or from the *Tophet and Eden* of the great Jewish poet of the thirteenth century, Immanuel of Rome? And when did he write each of the other books that are commonly assigned to him? Was the *Vita Nuova* the earliest or all but the latest of those books? Which of the poems not in the *Vita Nuova* or in the *Convito* are to be received as genuine? and which of the letters ascribed to him? Can we trace the wanderings of his exile? Did he then go to Paris for the second or the first time? What were his relations with Can Grande of Verona? Have the anecdotes which belong to this period the interest of showing how he "struck his contemporaries," what people said of him at the time, or are they only the rubbish of literary *raconteurs* of later date? Add to these problems the fact that "vicious criticism" has applied its tests to documents that have hitherto passed current as authentic, such, *e g.*, as the *Letter of Frate Ilario*, and even Malispini's and Dino Compagni's *Chronicles*, and pronounced them spurious, and it will be seen that the path which lies before the biographer is sufficiently difficult and beset with snares and stumbling-blocks.

How far I have succeeded in walking warily in this dangerous region it will be for my readers to judge. I will content myself with saying at the outset that I have not renounced the hope of bringing before them, not as in an "ideal biography," the man Dante Alighieri, as one of like passions with ourselves, as he lived and moved, as he thought and acted. I shall distinguish as I proceed between the certain, the doubtful, and the conjectural elements of his life, but I do not despair of taking students, as it were, within the brain and heart of the great poet of Mediæval Christendom. And in regard to the two chief questions at issue—the ultimate devotion and earnestness of Dante's faith and the historical personality of Beatrice de' Portinari—I will say at the

outset, after working my way through all the speculations of Rossetti, and the *delirantium somnia* of Aroux, and all the scepticism of Bartoli, *Manet immota fides*

## I.

## EARLY BOYHOOD

ET 1-18 — A D 1265-1283.

The opening scene of our drama is the small Piazza of the Church of S Martino del Vescovo in Florence. It stands in one of the oldest, least altered portions of that city, in what was known as the first of the Sesti, or six districts into which Florence was divided, not far from the Porta S Piero (*Par* xvi 41) \*. After the manner of the time members of the same family lived, for the sake of mutual protection, in the same neighbourhood, and the family of the Aldighieri had several houses lying between the church and the great Benedictine abbey. In one of these, nearly opposite the church, if the local traditions be trustworthy, and the house now shown as the *Casa di Dante* be actually the poet's birthplace, lived, in 1265, Aldighiero degli Aldighieri. It was distinctly the house of a burgher and not of a noble. There was no gateway leading into a courtyard, no tower, rising, as in the dwellings of counts and barons, over its humbler neighbours. The rooms were small. Aldighiero himself was a "jurisconsult" by profession—something, I take it, of the attorney type, drawing up contracts and conveyances of estates, advising as to wills, acting for his neighbours when they got involved in law proceedings. His brother Brunetto was one of the guardians of the Carroccio, or Car of State, which figured in all military enterprises, and the loss or safety of which was the measure of victory or defeat, and with another brother, Gherardo, was one of the procurators (= churchwardens) of the parish (*Frat. V D* p. 29). Aldighiero himself had a house and considerable landed property in Florence and the neighbourhood (*Frat. V. D* pp. 42-50). Altogether we may picture him to ourselves as a respectable representative of the burgher class in a rising and prosperous city of Italy in the thirteenth century. As such, he and his father had naturally been Guelphs, had been, that

\* See the historical map of Florence in the *Atta*, to *Phil*, showing the several stages of the city's growth, and Witte, *D F* 1 pp. 1-19, *Der Plan von Florenz um das Jahr 1300*.

is, on the side of the people and the Pope, as against the oppression of the Imperial Vicars who administered the affairs of the Empire, and of the feudal nobility who adhered to the cause of Ghibellinism as that of their natural protector. The Aldighieri family, however, did not look upon themselves as belonging to the *demos* of Florence. Their position in the centre of the city showed that they were of the old inhabitants, the *popolo vecchio*, the *populus* (to use the word in its classic sense) of Florence, not of the *plebs* who had flocked in from Fiesole, and were looked on with contempt as a rougher and coarser race (*H* xv. 62; *Par* xii 49-51). They cherished the memory of a great ancestor, the Cacciaguida of *Par* xv.-xvii., who had been a crusader under the Emperor Conrad III. in 1143, and identified themselves with the descendants of the old Romans who had made Florence the daughter of the imperial city\* (*II*. xv. 77, *Ep* v 4). What their older name had been we have no exact knowledge, but tradition connected them with the Elisei (*Par* xv 136), or the Frangipani, who had been famous at Rome in the tenth and eleventh centuries.† The name Aldighieri had come to them through the marriage of Cacciaguida with a daughter of a house of that name in Ferrara or Parma. As with many family names in old records, our own Shakespeare being perhaps the most memorable instance, that name appears in many varieties of spelling (some twelve are reckoned), ending in the Alighieri which has become historical. The idea, which has naturally attracted the play of fancy (so, e.g., with Mr J. A. Symonds), that it was a case of *nomen et omen*, as though the name meant the "wing-bearer," must be rejected as resting on a false etymology, adopted by the poet's descendants at Verona (suggested probably by the device of the Scaligeri there), and embodied, after the fashion of what is called "canting" heraldry, in the new coat of arms, a wing *or* on a field *azure*, that replaced the older shield, which, in form, though not in colour, was that of the Frangipani. Experts trace the name, in which we find an equivalent to our English Eadgar, to a German

\* The descent from Rome involved, of course, a share in the glories of the Troy from which Rome had sprung. What the legends of Brut and Iroynovant were to Spenser (*F* Q ii 10), that the story of Æneas and his companions was to Dante. The younger Priam and Antenor had founded Venice and Padua. The prominence given to Electra in *H* iv 121, is connected with the belief that she had founded Fiesole, as the first city in Europe (*Vil* i 5, 7).

† Dante's silence as to any ancestors beyond Cacciaguida (*Par* xvi 43-45) has been taken to intimate that what he knew of them was not to their credit. A comparison of *H* iv 104, *V* N c 39, will show that this was precisely his formula for implying the exact opposite. Like St. Paul, he would not speak of the things of which he might have boasted (*a* Cor xi. xii.)

origin (*Adel-ger* = noble spear); a less probable derivation is from "*alga*," *aliga*, as though the name meant "seaweed gatherers," and the family had come from the Maemma \* (*Pott, Fam Namen.*, pp. 193, 245).

By his first marriage with Lapa de' Cialuffi, Aldighiero had a daughter, married to Leone Poggi, whose son Andrea we shall meet hereafter, and a son Francesco, of whom we know nothing more than that he married, had children, and died in 1332,† by his second, with Bella (surname unknown), his only child was the poet. He shared the fortunes of his party after the Ghibelline victory of Montaperti in 1260 (*H* x 85, *Par* vi. 112), and was banished from the city, but he, or at least his wife, returned in or before 1265, and in the month of May, as indicated by the allusions to the poet's birth under the genial influences of Gemini in *H*. xv 55, *Par*. xxii 112, she gave birth to a child, who received the name of Durante, contracted popularly into Dante ‡ The choice of the name is probably traceable, as it had not occurred previously in the history of the family, to its significance as indicating permanence. As the example of Dante da Maiano shows, it was not uncommon. The day of birth remains doubtful. Popular tradition, sufficiently accepted to form the basis of a sexcentenary festival at Florence in 1865, fixed May 14, but Witte (*D F.* ii. 28, *D. Gesell.* i. 145) conjecturally assigns May 30 as being the *Festa* of the Florentine S. Lucia, and thus accounting for the prominence given to that saint in *H* ii 97, *Purg* ix. 55, *Par*. xxxii 137. The after-thoughts of the next generation must be credited with the legends reported by Boccaccio (*V D*) as to the mother's dream that she gave birth to her son under a lofty laurel and by a clear stream, that he grew up feeding on the laurel berries and drinking of the water of the brook, that he became a shep-

\* Compare the elaborate paper by K. Witte and others in *D Gesell* i. 249-268. He hesitates between the meaning given above and that of "foreign," "whole," "old," or "hero" for the first part of the word. Professor Max Müller, in a letter in answer to my inquiries, says that the "name is certainly Ientomir, but shares Witte's doubts. Anyhow, there is proof enough to show that Germans may rightly say of the great Florentine—"We also have a share in him." Englishmen may perhaps regret that they cannot prove the name to be more than analogous to "Shakespeare."

† For the fullest account of the Aldighieri family see Litta's magnificent *Famiglie Storiche* and *Frat V D* c. 1.

‡ The kindred name of "Durandus" is familiar enough. Durante appears as a surname in the eighteenth century, Peter Durante setting to music the *Dies Ira* of Thomas of Celano. The Venetian Dandolo may have a like origin. Durant is found in England among the descendants of the Huguenots (*Yonge, Christ Names*, i. p. 389).

herd and strove to gather the laurel leaves for a crown; and that, as he struggled for them, he was transformed into a peacock.

Of the character of the poet's mother we know next to nothing. In the one solitary passage in which there is any allusion to her (*H* viii. 45), he seems to connect her influence, either by heredity or example, with his "scorn of scorn," if not with his "love of love;" and we have no records of her from the pen of others. There is, however, a certain kind of suggestiveness in the manifold pictures of child-life in which the *Comm* abounds (*Ferr M. D* gives fifteen), almost as tender and pathetic in their way as those of Keble's *Lyra Innocentium*. We have the mother rescuing her child from fire (*H* xxiii. 37), soothing it when it is in the delirium of fever (*Par* i. 102), hearing its penitent confessions when it has done wrong (*Purg* xxxi. 64), the one refuge which the child seeks instinctively in terror or disquiet (*Purg* lxxx. 44, *Par* xxii. 1, xxiii. 121). I, for one, can scarcely help seeing in these touches the memories of early childhood, which rose, even in manhood and old age, clear and distinct in the hazy dimness of the past, just as I find in *Par*. xv. 121-126 the recollection of the lullabies of his own infancy, and the tales of Fiesole and Rome, which had made him feel in early boyhood that he was a "citizen of no mean city." I have no wish, as I have said, to write an "ideal biography," but reading backwards from Giotto's portrait in the Bargello of Florence, which forms the frontispiece of this volume, I seem to see a child of quick eager intelligence, with dark, glancing, melancholy, dreamy eyes, with hair of the golden auburn—"flavescere" is the word he uses of himself (*Ep ad Joann Virg* i. 44)—often seen in Italian boys, which darkens afterwards into brown, asking many questions and saying strange things, devout with a child's devotion to the Virgin and the saints, especially S. Lucia, learning his Latin Grammar, probably at the Abbey school,\* in the Manual of Donatus (*Par*. xii. 137). Altogether a precocious boy this, of whom friends and teacher may well augur great things, such an one as a later generation saw in John Pico de Mirandola and the "admirable" Crichton, as our own century has seen in John Stuart Mill and Connop Thirlwall. On such a boy the interdict which Gregory X. laid on the city from 1273-1276 must have worked with a strange effect. No bells rung, no masses said, the gates of heaven closed

\* The earliest notice of any state High-School at Florence is in 1320 (*Denzke*, i. 553).

by him who had the keys that he might open—this, I take it, must have heightened the natural susceptibility of the devout boy, and borne strange fruit in after years (*Purg.* iii. 124-135, *Par xxvii* 46-51)

But the most startling instance of that precocity, of which one scarcely knows whether to speak of it as physical, psychical, or spiritual, or blending all three elements in undefinable proportions, is that of which we read in the opening chapter of the *Vita Nuova*. For the boy Dante that *Incipit Vita Nova* which he wrote in the book of memory, meant more than that he had passed from childhood to youth as other boys pass. A new world, a new life was opening on him on that May morning when he went at the age of nine with his father to the house of their neighbour, Folco de' Portinari, for a *festa* after the manner of the time, and saw the form of the child Bice or Beatrice (so people called her, not thinking in either case what the name meant (*V. N.* c. 1)), a few months younger, clothed in crimson, and in the radiance of an angel-like beauty with fair hair and bright blue eyes, and pearl-white complexion (*Purg.* xxxi. 116, *V. N.* c. 36). The stirrings of the new life began, and the boy, who had been accustomed to say his prayers and hymns and read his Bible, and talk with his master and schoolfellows, in Latin, and with whom, therefore, it was not strange to think and soliloquise in that language, felt something like fear and trembling at the nascent emotion. Following the physiology of his time, which even at that age he may have picked up from a teacher like Brunetto Latini, and in which all perceptions and emotions were ascribed to the action of distinct forces or "spirits" in man's nature, he seemed to hear their voices speaking within him, and the spirit of life in the heart said, "*Ecce Deus fortior me, qui veniens dominabitur mihi*," and the animal, or psychical, spirit in the brain said to the spirit of vision, "*Apparuit jam beatitudo vestra*," yes, and even the spirit of the lower life of nutrition and digestion (one smiles at the naive truthfulness of the confession from one whose health had suffered at once from study and emotion (*V. N.* c. 23)) said, "*Heu miser! quia frequentius impeditus ero demum*" (*V. N.* c. 2). Nowhere in literature, not even in the Confessions of Augustine or Rousseau, is there such an unveiling of the *genesis* of a master-passion as that which is thus recorded. That day, even for the boy of nine, was the turning point of his destiny.

For a long time it stood out in his memory apart by itself, and its very isolation gave it a peculiar power. As in most cities of Europe in the thirteenth century, the girls of well-to-do families were brought up in great seclusion at home, or sent to a convent school, and nine years passed before a single word from Beatrice's lips fell on her boy-lover's ears (*V. N. c. 3*). If he saw her at all, it was only with a stolen glance in the Church of S. Lucia or S. Martin. Meantime the education of the boy went on, quickened into even greater activity than before by the hope of one day doing something to win Beatrice's praise, and do honour to her name. It was about this time (1) that he lost his father (1274, within a few months, *i.e.*, of the great crisis), and (2) that he probably came under the influence of Brunetto Latini. The fact that that scholar and an uncle of Dante's had the same Christian name, indicates, possibly, that the two families were on terms of intimacy. There is no evidence that Brunetto kept a school, or was in any sense a professional teacher, his occupation being that of *dettatore* (secretary or town-clerk) in the little republic of Florence, rising, at times, to the dignity of ambassador (*Vill. vi. 74*). A man of his culture and general kindness, however, could hardly fail to be interested in the clever and precocious orphan, and as the boy was passing into adolescence, he came under Brunetto's instruction. The influence was partly good and partly evil. The man was an almost typical representative of the earlier *renaissance*. He had been exiled as a Guelph, after Montaperta (*Vill. vi. 80*), and had spent his exile at the University of Paris. He was conversant with Latin literature, translated Cicero, perhaps knew a little Greek, studied the *Trouvères* of France and the Troubadours of Provence, was an omnivorous collector of encyclopædic knowledge on all subjects—astronomy, botany, zoology, ancient and modern history, geography. He embodied all his stores of knowledge in a French book, with the title of the *Trésor*. He wrote a kind of Pilgrim's Progress in Italian verse, which he published as his *Tesoretto*, describing, in a manner which may have suggested the opening lines of the *Inferno*, how he had been lost in the dark forest of error, and had been led on to Truth and Holiness. He could discourse eloquently, "drawing fine pictures," to use Butler's phrase, of the beauty of Virtue. The influence of such a man was, for the time, attractive for good to the



young and ardent student. He was kind, fatherly, and genial in his look and manner. He taught him how man attains to an eternity of fame, perhaps also how he may gain an eternal blessedness (*II. xv 82-87 n*). For all this Dante could not but feel grateful to him. But, on the other hand, he was, in his own phrase, *un poco mondanetto*, "a man of the world," worldly, a sensualist whose vices were of the deepest dye.\* There must have been a moment in Dante's youth when the discovery of that baseness opened to him, as it were, the burning depths of the abyss, and so far as he at least knew, Brunetto had never shown any real contrition (*II. xv*.) He had died (1294) like many others of his type, and had made no sign (*Viii viii 10*).

For the time, however, the mind of the student expanded under this culture. He learnt to read French and Provençal poetry, including the cycle poets of the Arthurian legends (*V E 1. 10*), especially perhaps Sordello (*Purg vi, vii*) and Arnand Daniel (*Purg xxvi; V. E. ii. 2*), became acquainted with the earlier Italian poets, Guittone of Arezzo (*Purg xxiv 56, xxvi 124*), Jacopo da Lentino (*Purg xlii 56*), and Guido Guinzeelli (*Purg. xi 97, xxvi 92*). He must have had some practice in writing, with them as his models, in order to attain the facility shown in his earliest extant sonnet, written at eighteen (*V N., S 1*). With this there were other forms of art in which he delighted. Cimabue and Giotto were then in Florence, and the latter was Dante's personal friend, the well-born Florentine, proud of his ancestry, recognising the nobility of genius in the peasant artist, and the poet who wrote of angels could also paint them† (*Purg xi. 94, V. N. c 35*). The former had his studio outside the Porta S. Piero, not far from Dante's home, and the young man, then twenty-three, may have taken part in the great procession, in honour of the celebrated Madonna, which was said to have stamped on that quarter of the city the name of the Borgo Allegri (1293) (*Cronica and Cavalc 1. 202-234*). Casella, whom he met in the "milder shades of Purgatory," initiated him in the

\* It is suggestive that Roger Bacon records the fact that some foreign lecturers were banished from Paris by Louis IX. for like flagrant immoralities. (*Comp Stud ii 5*)

† I cannot help quoting Browning's lines —

"You and I would rather see that angel,  
Painted by the tenderness of Dante,  
Would we not?—than read a fresh Inferno"

—*Men and Women—One Word More*

mysteries of music, set his verses to melodious tunes, taught him, we may believe, to appreciate the beauties of Church hymns and Antiphons (*Purg.* 11 91). We seem to see the two in Belacqua's shop, as the musical instrument-maker lounged lazily in his chair or took his afternoon *siesta* (*Purg.* 14 126). Guido Cavalcanti, some years older than himself, bright, genial, cultivated, became his chiefest friend (*V. N. c.* 3, 31), and the two were as David and Jonathan, Orestes and Pylades, in their intimacy, till they were divided by their different estimate of Virgil, in itself but as a "little rift," but the symbol of a difference in thought, feeling, creed, morals that went down to the foundations of life, and widened into a chasm (*H x* 63)\* Then there were also Cino of Pistoia, whose numerous sonnets and *canzoni* to his Selvaggia led Dante to class him as emphatically the "poet of love," while he claimed for himself the higher honour of being the "poet of righteousness" (*V. E.* 11 2, *Bart.* 14 c. 3-5), and Dante of Maiano, somewhat cynical and coarse, and given (*e g.* his answer to *S.* 1) to much "chaffing" of his sentimental friends Villani, the future historian of Florence, was, at least, his neighbour, and probably his friend (*Vill.* 11. 136). And among the memories of those days, if I mistake not, was one of a lady advanced in years, but retaining much of the "fatal gift of beauty," for which she had been famous, living in a convent, a friend of the Cavalcanti, full of good works, emancipating her serfs, kindly and benignant, fond of all children, specially interested in a boy whose genius and force of character reminded her of her own Sordello in the distant past, the Cunizza whom, in spite of all her sins, and they were many, Dante placed in Paradise (it is true in its Venus sphere) when he was nearing the close of his own life, and Paradise was becoming to him a living and near reality (*Par.* 11. 32 n).

Nor was the young man's life that of a student, litterateur, artist only. He threw himself into the sports of his age and class, and became a master of the art of falconry, which the Emperor Frederick II., who wrote an elaborate treatise on it, had made popular throughout Italy. MSS. of that treatise (*D'Aginc.* 111. fol. 73) are extant, copiously illustrated with illuminations of every

\* Bocc (*Dec.* vi 9) says that his scepticism extended to the threshold of atheism. Bar-toli (iv 162) quotes a painfully suggestive sonnet as to Guido's license by Lapo Farinata degli Uberti. His father is placed by Dante in the circle of the Epicureans, *i. e.*, Materialists, and he had married the daughter of Farinata, who is also in that circle.

detail, which Dante may have seen, and which, over and above his own manifest delight and keenness of observation, may have suggested some of the many similes in the *Comun* drawn from the falconer and the falcon (*H* xvii 127, xxii 130, *Purg* xix. 64; *Par.* xix 34) I picture the boy Dante farther, as one who loved eagerly to dwell on the traditions of the past, who rejoiced to hear the tales of Cacciaguida and Bellincione Berti (*Par* xv 112), looked back upon the good old days, knew every tower and gate and church in Florence, with all the legends that had grown up round them, the families that had died out or were still flourishing, the changes from poverty to wealth or wealth to poverty (*Par* xv., xvi.), as well as Scott knew the traditions of the Borderland, who rejoiced alike in the *fiesta* of March 30th, a survival of Paganism, when the old statue of Mars on the Ponte Vecchio was decked with flowers (*Giov Pis* on *H* xiii 143), and in the services of the Baptistry In the font of that building his great crusading forefather had been christened, in it he himself had been signed with the sign of the cross as a soldier of Christ, it was to his dying day still his "beautiful St John" (*H* xix. 17, *Par* xv 134, xxv. 8), and to it every true citizen of Florence, all of whom were, as a rule, baptized there, looked as a bond of union amidst all their manifold divisions (*D C* ii p 258)

Was his life confined within the narrow limits of the streets of Florence? That question, in the absence of adequate data, cannot be answered with certainty, but an affirmative answer seems to me in the highest degree improbable Boys in the Middle Ages were turned out for their *vauleijahre*, to see the world, and to pick up knowledge, at an age which seems to us almost startlingly young The universities were largely public schools, "academies," more in the modern English sense of the term than in the higher classical ideal Boys went there to learn their *trivium*\* and *quadrivium*, their elements of Latin, science, history, music, at the age of thirteen or fourteen † Nor were these scholars only from the country to which the university belonged The higher uni-

\* The *Trivium* included Latin grammar, rhetoric and dialectic, the *Quadrivium* arithmetic, geometry, music, and astronomy Ethics, metaphysics, and law and theology came later

† The Theodosian Code forbade youths to remain at school after twenty Early Oxford Registers furnish instances of the M A degree taken at the age of eighteen John Donne, afterwards Dean of St. Paul's, entered Oxford at ten, and removed to Cambridge at thirteen (Walton, *Life*).

versities, like Paris, Bologna, and Oxford, had such vast numbers of lads under their care, that, as a mere matter of police, they divided them into four or more "nations," according to their birthplace. So, at Paris, there were four of these groups, those of France, England, Normandy and Picardy, the first including, besides the archiepiscopal provinces of Paris, Sens, Rheims, and Bourges, all scholars from other parts of France and from Italy (*Lacroix*, p. 7, *Denzig*, 185-106). I could not reject a tradition that Dante studied from fourteen to seventeen at Bologna or Padua, or even at Paris or Oxford (as reported by Giov. da Serravalle in the Preface to his Latin translation of the *Commedia*), on the ground that it was improbable. And the manifold traces of travels in that direction, by the Riviera (*Purg* iii 49), through Arles (*H.* ix. 112), up the Rhone (*H.* ix 112; *Par* vi. 60, viii. 59), across to the Rhine (*H.* xvii 21), to Cologne (*H.* xxiii 63), Bruges, Wissant (*H.* xv 4 n), a port which no one would visit except as a place of embarkation for England, and the Thames (*H.* xii 120), must be allowed, I think, in spite of a scepticism like Bartoli's (*V.* 48-52, 111-220), which would refuse to see any evidence of Byron's travels in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, to give an approach to certainty to the hypothesis that, at some time or other, he had been at both the two Universities which I have placed last in order. As regards Bologna, then specially famous for its lectures on Aristotle and the Canon Law, the case is still stronger. He knows all about its localities, as in the "salse" of *H.* xviii. 51, all about its dialects, as in the *V. E.* i 15, all about its professors (*H.* xv 110) and its leading families (*H.* xxiii. 103, 142, *Purg* xiv 100). Brunetto, it may be added, as a French scholar who had himself studied at Paris, would be likely to recommend it to so promising a pupil, and it would be quite after the manner of the time for five or six such students to start in company, under the guidance of some older scholar, journeying on foot.\* It was, I surmise, on his return from one of these absences that Dante heard of that which was the second turning-point of his life, the marriage of Beatrice to Simon de' Bardì.

\* The intimate business relations of the banking families of Florence with both France and England, where they collected first fruits and annates for the Pope, and tithes and rents from livings held by Italian ecclesiastics, would obviously give facilities for such journeys. Prominent among the bankers who were engaged in such transactions in England were the Bardì. Comp. p. 37, n.

A young man, with tastes and powers such as we have seen, could scarcely fail to be interested in the political events which were passing round him, and I note accordingly the most conspicuous of those which are recorded during the first eighteen years of his life, and to which we find him referring in the *Comm.*

- 1266 Battle of Benevento and death of Manfred, the Guelphs return to Florence (*H* x. 50), death of Manfred (*Purg.* iii 112)  
 The two Frati Gaudenti of *H* xxiii 105 persecute the Ghibellines of Florence, specially the Uberti Exile of Farinata degli Uberti by Soldanieri (*H* xxvii 121)  
 Niccolò Pisano begins the Church of the Dominicans at Bologna, and the pulpit of the Cathedral of Siena.
- 1267 The Uberti excluded from the general amnesty (*H* x 83).
- 1268 Defeat and death of Conradin (*H* xxviii 16, *Purg* xx. 67)
- 1270 Cino of Pistoia *l* (Guittoncino de' Simbaldi), (*V E* ii 2)  
 Murder of Henry, son of Richard of Cornwall, by Guy de Montfort, at Viterbo (*H* xii 119)
- 1273 Gregory X. meets Charles of Anjou and Baldwin II at Florence, endeavours to reconcile the Guelphs and Ghibellines, fails, and places the city under an interdict (1273-1276)  
 Rodolph of Hapsburg elected Emperor  
 Ghibellines of Florence recalled by Gregory X, exiled again 1275, return 1279
- 1274 March 7 Death of S Thomas Aquinas (*Purg* xx 69, *Par* x 98)  
 May 1 Dante's first sight of Beatrice (*Purg.* xii. 110).  
 Adam of Brescia executed for false coming.
- 1274 Death of S Bonaventura (*Par* xii 127).  
 Death of Pier della Broccia (*Purg* vi 19)  
 Michael Zanche (*H* xxii 88, xxxiii 114).
1276. Guido Guinicelli *d* (*Purg* xi 94).
1277. Nicolas III. elected Pope (*H*. xix 3).
1278. Ottocar, King of Bohemia, *d* (*Purg* vii. 57).  
 Nicolo Pisano *d*.  
 Campo Santo at Pisa begun by Giovanni Pisano.  
 First stone of S. Maria Novella laid, Oct. 18.

- 1279 Albert the Great *d.* (*Par.* x 98).  
Adam of Brescia burnt alive (*H.* xxx. 63).
1281. Sordello *d.* (*Purg.* vi. 58)  
French defeated at Forlì by Count Guido di Montefeltro  
(*H.* xxvii. 43).
1282. March 31. Sicilian Vespers (*Par.* viii 73, *Sonn.* X. viii.  
8 n.; *Canz.* iv. 42).  
June 13 Institution of Priori as magistrates of Florence  
replacing the fourteen Signori. Change democratic in  
tendency.

## II.

## THE GREAT TRILOGY \*—(1) THE VITA NUOVA.

ÆT. 18-25—A.D. 1283-1290

The social habits of Florence did not admit of much intercourse between boys and girls of the upper classes. The former, as we have seen, had their work at the Abbey school, or were sent to carry on that work at one of the rising universities in Italy or France. The latter led a secluded life at home, or were sent to a convent school. And so it was that during the nine years that followed that first vision of beauty which transformed the boy's life, he and Beatrice never exchanged a word (*V. N.* c. 3). If he saw her at all, it was only at church, and there also the girls, as was customary throughout Europe in the Middle Ages, were separated from the boys, women from men. The memory of that vision, however, could scarcely be unfruitful in natural hopes, which the impulses of adolescence would as naturally strengthen. Those hopes were, as we know, destined to disappointment. It was, as I have said, probably on his return for one of the university vacations that he learned that his Beatrice had been given to another. Folco dei Portinari had looked out for a suitable marriage for his daughter, and had fixed on Simon de' Bardi, a member of the banking families of Florence, having France and England for his chief field of operations,† lending money to nobles, collecting the Pope's

\* I owe the phrase and the thought to Witte, *D. F.* i pp. 141-182. Comp. also Spartazzini's *Dante's innerer Entwicklungs-Geschichte in D. Gesell.* iii pp. 1-41.

† The register of Bishop Droghensford of Bath and Wells, 1309-1329 (fo. 72), shows that the Bardi were employed to collect the tithe for six years, levied by Clement V for the crusade contemplated by Henry VII. They are described as the "*societas Bardorum*," or, in another document, as "*nos chers marchands de la compaignie des Bardis*." (*Wells Cath. MSS.* p. 300.)

annates, first-fruits, and the like (*Frat V D* 114), and personally able to settle a handsome dowry. Of that marriage Dante never speaks. The husband is for him simply as though he had not been. It was a sorrow too deep for words. Once only, towards the close of his life, do we get a glimpse into what his feelings must have been, when, in words which remind us of *Locksley Hall* or *Maud*, he takes up his parable against the greed of gain, and the social conventions which had blighted the happiness of his life (*Par* xv. 103-105). Even though he had come out of the fiery furnace of that trial purified and strengthened, though he might feel that without it he could not have done what he actually did, the fast aging man, as he drew towards the end of life, could not repress the thought of what might have been the "earthly happier" portion of his life had it been otherwise.

At the time he made up his mind to accept the inevitable in silence. "Concealment" might eat "like a worm i' the bud" into the opening blossom of his life, but the world should know nothing of his sorrow. And there was, at least, some compensation. The married women of Florence had a greater freedom of action than the unmarried. When he first met Beatrice after her marriage (I have proved the fact in the notes on *Sonn* 1), in company with two elder friends—that she was with them is perhaps an indication of the timidity of the young bride—she could give him the friendly greeting—the *salute*, in both senses of the word, on which Dante harps (*V N* c. 3, 11, 18), and the smile, which would before have been thought unbecomingly. Till then he had never heard words spoken by her lips, nor seen on them a smile meant for him. The effect was to revive the memory, now nine years old, into a resurrection life of new intensity, at once of joy and bitterness. Now, however, there was the mitigation of pain which poets of the first order know, and he could give vent at once to the sorrow of his soul by utterance.

I have entered so fully into the sequence and significance of the poems of the *V N*, that it is unnecessary now to go through the strange introspective analysis which they reveal. It will be enough to recall how Dante sought to conceal his passionate devotion, how he dreamt for a moment of what life might have been had there been no necessity for concealment (*S* 2), how, to avoid the whispered comments of her friends, he pretended that another, and not

Beatrice, was the object of his homage (*V N. c. 9*); how that artifice brought about its natural result, and led Beatrice to look on him with displeasure for what appeared disloyalty, how he mourned over the death of one of her friends, and, as I surmise, glorified her memory, as he afterwards glorified Beatrice herself, by making her the Matilda of his earthly Paradise, that the two friends who had been lovely and pleasant in their lives might not be divided in their death (*V N c 8; Purg xxviii 40 n.*), how he shared the sorrow of his beloved one when her father died (*V. N. c 22*); how he felt her influence to be purifying and ennobling, filling his soul with a universal charity like her own (*V. N. c. 21, 26, 27*), how the nerves of the body sympathised with the overwrought tension of mind and spirit, and he became subject to fainting fits and sharp fevered pain, and dimmed and inflamed eyes, so that the shadow of death seemed to fall on him (*H xxvi 7, Purg. ix 16-18*), how in that shadow of the valley he heard a voice that told him that Beatrice must die, and saw her funeral rites in visions of the early morn, when dreams are true (*V N. c 23*), how too soon the prophetic vision was fulfilled, and the horror of great darkness fell upon him, and Beatrice was taken where the angels, who had long desired her presence, dwell in peace (*V. N. c. 29-31*), and he was left, as it seemed, inconsolable, after seven years of that time of great joy, and also of great pain, to the long sorrow of a "widowed life" (*Conv ii 2*) One mysterious consolation there was, indeed, connected with her death which he treasured up in silence, that a stranger might not intermeddle with the joy of the heart which knew too keenly its own bitterness. She had said or done something, as she was dying, which he could not repeat without seeming to praise himself (*V N c 29*). Had she, we ask, sent him a message to say that she had all along appreciated the purity of his love, and would pray for him to St Mary and St Lucia (her parish church in the *Via de' Bardì* was dedicated to the latter), behind the veil, as she had done on earth?

For a like reason, I do not enter here, with any fulness, into the question of the ethical bearings of the relation which we have traced, and refer to my notes on the Sonnets which I have mentioned. To us that relation seems perilous, tending to crime, if not actually criminal, certain to end in a scandal or a tragedy, in the *cause célèbre* of the Divorce Court, or the Assizes. If those



dangers are avoided, then we think, with the half-amused, half-scornful feeling which we find in English travellers in Italy in the eighteenth and first half of the nineteenth centuries, of the strange family party, consisting of the husband, the wife and the *cicisbeo* or *cavaliere servente* of the "fribble" or "tame-cat" type, dancing attendance, fetching and carrying, and we wonder which of the two men is the most contemptible. The latter of those two names, however, might remind us that what we scorn is the degenerate copy of a noble ideal. The highest thought of chivalry, the leading idea of the Provençal poetry which Dante had studied, was that the service of the lover was an unselfish service, that he admired and loved his fair one because she was fair, her visible beauty having power to purify and strengthen. It was enough for him to have a kindly word,—a smile of praise raised him to the seventh heaven. He was willing, for her sake, to encounter dangers and do noble deeds, to die even, if his death would help her. To those years, accordingly, Dante looked back, in the hour of keenest self-accusing introspection, with no feeling of reproach or shame (*Purg* xxx. 121-123). They were for him a *Vita Nuova*, a new and higher life \* than he had known before or than he knew afterward, till he re-entered on it in its transfigured completeness.

We must remember, however, that there was another life running on side by side with this. No man can spend seven years of life at that stage of growth in sighs and sonnets. The sonnets themselves opened the way to the fame, which, as the fact that he sent the first of them to the friends who shared his tastes shows, was, even then, not absent from his thoughts. Gradually he became known as the rising poet of the time, and *Dante d'Aldighieri poeta* was thought a sufficient description when he was formally registered in 1295 as a member of the Guild of Physicians and Apothecaries. One indication of the repute thus gained is seen in the fact that the young man, then probably not more than twenty-four, was painted by Giotto, in the Bargello fresco, side by side with Latini and Corso Donati. That portrait may help us to understand the young Dante as the plaster cast of Ravenna helps us to understand the old. That face of deep, rather than passionate emotion, of

\* I adopt this meaning rather than that of simply "youth" or "early manhood" which has been accepted by many commentators.

indomitable will, with its possibilities of intense pride and intense lowliness, its dreaminess and pathos, reveals the man as he was before the harder discipline of his life began. For the present, however, the brighter aspect of that life had play. The sportive spirit of *S* 2 was, at least in some measure, the reflexion of his life. Falconry, painting, music, had each its several attractions. The *festas* of Easter, Epiphany, All Saints' Day (*S* 19), were days much to be remembered. It was emphatically the brightest time that Florence had ever known. There were Courts of Love (*Faur* 1. 299, *Malisp* c. 237) and parties of fair ladies and knightly youths, artists, poets, musicians, in Fiesole or Vallombrosa (*Purg* xxix. 4 n), gatherings at marriage-feasts or funerals (*V N.* c. 8, 9, 14). The old studies in Virgil, Lucan, Ovid, Statius were still carried on. The poems of Sordello, Daniel, Guinicelli, the Arthurian legends, and those of Charlemagne and his peers, the Vulgate and the Service Books of the Latin Church, all took their turn. He passed from the epitome of Universal Knowledge to be found in Brunetto's *Trésor*, and studied his history in Orosius, his natural history in Pliny, his astronomy in Ptolemy. His social reputation was secured. One who could write a poem (the *serventese* of *V N.* c. 6) on the sixty who were chief among the belles of Florence must have lived in what we should call the "upper circles" of its society (*V. N.* c. 14, 18). It was not strange that, when Charles Martel, son of Charles II. of Naples, passed through Florence a year before Beatrice's death (1289), on his way from Spain with his father, the two young men should have attracted each the other, that Dante, always tending to idealise, should have seen in him the pattern of all princely grace and virtue, and placed him in Paradise, and, like Cunizza, in the sphere of Venus, as specially appropriate to his character, that here also (*Par* viii. 49-57) the thought of what might have been, how infinitely brighter and happier, had the chances and changes of life been other than they were, weighed on him, in later years, with an oppressive sadness. The month that followed Charles's visit was yet more important. The exiled Ghibellines had allied themselves with the citizens of Arezzo in the hope of forcing a return to Florence, and the Florentines, aided by Bologna, Lucca, and Pistoia, led out an army against them, of which Corso Donati and Vieri de' Cerchi, afterwards such bitter opponents, were the chief leaders. Dante,

then twenty-four, fought at Campaldino on that memorable St. Barnabas' day (June 11, 1289) as a volunteer under Vieri (*Vill.* vii. 131, *D. C.* 1), and has described, in a fragment of a letter given in *Frat V. D.* p. 94, the nervous thrill of excitement, if not of fear (*temenza molta*), with which he entered into the battle, and the corresponding joy of victory. Fighting on the same side with him was one of the brothers of Francesca of Rimini. Fighting on the other was the Buonconte, whose body could not be found after the battle, and for whom Dante creates the ideal death-scene of *Purg.* v. 88-129. In the September of the same year Dante took part with his fellow-citizens in the capture of Caprona (*H.* xi. 96). And as if that year were to remain for ever with more vivid memories for himself and for mankind than most, we note that March 12th had witnessed the death of Ugolino, that September 4th witnessed that of Francesca.

A few other facts, in which Dante must have been interested, may be noted from *Ferr. M. D.* 11, in chronological order

- 1284. Loggia of Orto S. Michele built by Arnolfo  
     June 5. Charles II. of Naples defeated and taken prisoner  
         by the admiral of Peter III. of Arragon  
     Aug 6. Genoese defeat Pisans in the battle of Meloria  
     Accession of Philip the Fair of France
  - 1285. Large expansion of Florence under the direction of Arnolfo  
     Spectacles invented by Salvino Armati of Florence
  - 1287. Slavery abolished by the Commune of Florence. Cunizza,  
     it may be noted, had given freedom to her slaves (*qu.*  
     serfs), in 1265, by a deed of which Gundo Cavalcanti's  
     father was one of the witnesses, and which was executed  
     in his house
  - 1288. Death of Folco de' Portinari, June 23, after founding an  
     hospital in Florence for the sick poor (*V. N. c.* 22)
  - 1290. First stone of Cathedral of Orvieto laid by Nicolas III.
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## III.

## THE GREAT TRILOGY.—(II) MARRIED AND PUBLIC LIFE.

ÆT. 25-31.—A D 1290-1301.

Life has to be lived and work done even under conditions like that of the sorrow which fell on Dante with Beatrice's death. That sorrow had seemed inconsolable, and he had given vent to his grief in a letter opening with the words of *Lam i 1*, *Quomodo sedet sola civitas*, addressed to the chief citizens of Florence,\* and in a *canzone* and a sonnet, the latter written at the request of Beatrice's brother. So a year passed away, a time of sorrow, perhaps also of study, or of sensual recklessness as a reaction against the sorrow, and on the anniversary of her death he was drawing outlines of angels, which reminded him of her, and led to another sonnet (*V N c. 35*). Consolation, however, came, and that in two distinct forms. As he was plunged in grief he saw a gentle lady, whose face reminded him of his lost one, watching him with looks of pity (*V N c. 30*). He gazed on her with glowing affection, though not without self-reproach, and violent oscillations of emotion. In that inner conflict a vision of the glorified Beatrice came to recall him to his fidelity (*V N c. 40*, *Purg. xxx 134*), and not long afterwards another yet more wonderful, which made him resolve to write no more of his beloved one till he could write worthily of her, and so he held his peace in the hope of one day saying of her what had never yet been said of woman (*V N c. 43*). As he brooded over the *In exitu Israel de Ægypto* which had been chanted at her funeral (*Purg. 11 46 n*), the words had become pregnant with new meanings, which fell in with the new half-defined resolve. In that resolve we trace, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the germ of the *Commedia*.

\* *A principi della terra*. Translators and commentators have made merry, with their "shallow wit," over the young lover writing to "all the princes of the earth" about the death of his mistress. Dante, however, constantly uses *terra* for "city," specially for Florence, *II viii 77*, *130*, *IX 104*, *XVI 9*, *58*, and *principi* for "chief" or "leader" (*Par. xi 35*). He was only doing as he had done at the opening of his career as a poet, probably on a somewhat wider scale, justified by his increasing fame. The position of Beatrice's husband as one of the *mildannas* of Florence, to say nothing of the celebrity she had gained through Dante's homage, must have made her one of the leaders of society, and justified such a tribute to her memory. It was, so to speak, his funeral sermon, his threnody, in her honour.

In the *Convito*, however (ii. 13), written after his exile, the retrospect of this period of Dante's life is presented in a different form. In the depth of his sorrow he turned to a book, Boethius *de Consolatione Philosophiæ*, the title of which promised comfort. In his grief over what had been a passionate friendship, rather than the common love of man for woman, he turned to Cicero *de Amicitia*. He was led by what he found there to go deeper into the study of the philosophy in which the writers of those books had found so medicinal a power. He pictured philosophy to himself, as Boethius and others had done before him, as a woman of exceeding beauty, the "daughter of the great Emperor of the Universe." He persuaded himself and announced to others that she was the "gentle lady" of the *V. N.* who had had compassion on him, that the poems addressed to that lady were odes to philosophy, and that her bright beaming eyes were the lucid demonstrations of the higher metaphysics (*Conv.* ii. 13, iii. 11). The contrast between the two statements has naturally enough been the parent of a far-reaching scepticism. If, it has been urged, a tale told with so much circumstance as this is resolved into thin air, what guarantee have we that the equally circumstantial narratives of which Beatrice is the centre are not equally shadowy and unsubstantial (*Bart.* v pp. 55-81)? May not she also be simply a symbol of theology, or of the ideal of the Empire, or an anti-Christian Goddess of Reason, or a mystic, gnostic, Albigensian heresy, or what you will? The answer to that reasoning, however, is not far to seek, and is found in Dante's own character, in his own words. His whole mind was pervaded, as in *Conv.* ii. 1, *Ep.* xi. c. 11, by the mediæval law of the fourfold interpretation of Scripture. For that dreamy, subtle, rapidly moving mind of his, not Scripture only, but every event in his own life, was at once literal and allegorical and moral and anagogic or mystical, and any one of the three latter might, for a time, relegate the first to so remote a distance that it was as though it had not been\*. In the early years of exile, in his lonely wanderings, when the heart was knowing its own bitterness, when he looked back on the past, the incidents and actors of the *V. N.* may well have seemed to him

\* Giovanni da Serravalle is not far from the truth when he sums up the case thus quaintly: "*Dante dilexit hanc puellam Beatricem historicè et literaliter, sed allegoricè, sacram Theologum*."

"such stuff as dreams are made of." He had long been learning to think of Beatrice in Paradise as the impersonation of Divine Wisdom. That was the *raison d'être* of the great poem for which he was already working. Her friend had become, as Matilda, the type of cheerful activity. And so, as he looked back on those days of the gentle lady and her sympathy, and remembered how they had synchronised with the widening thoughts which began with Boethius and Cicero, and passed on to Aristotle and Averrhoes, he could see, behind the veil of fact, that she had been as the Philosophy which for a time had given him strength and comfort. The literal and the allegoric melted into each other like dissolving views. Add to this that he sought to establish his reputation at once as a poet and a 'master of those who know' by what was to have been the colossal encyclopædia, of which we have but the *torso* in the *Conv.*, that he thought that simply amatory poems to a flesh and blood *pargoletta* would have been out of place in such a work, and that he felt perhaps, as other poets have done, a half-malicious pleasure in mystifying the Philistines of his own and after times, and we have the key to the apparent paradox. The *V N* gives us, thus viewed, what was literally true. Few readers, I believe, always excepting the monomaniacs of adventurous hypotheses, can read the narrative and the poems without feeling that the latter grew out of the actual experience of the former. What came as the non-natural, *i e*, allegorical, interpretation was the after-thought of later years (Witte, *L. G.* ii 42, Krafft, *L. G.* pp 488-513).

Both in the letter and in its allegorical meaning, Dante looked back, towards the close of his life, on this period as a time of moral and spiritual declension. He had been unfaithful to his first human love in transferring the homage of his affections to the "gentle lady," the *pargoletta*, whom Beatrice names in her indictment, perhaps to other women also (*Purg.* xxxi 59). He had been unfaithful to Divine Wisdom, the true theology of revealed Truth, of which she was the symbolic embodiment, when he turned to the other "*pargoletta*," (*S.* 35) of a merely human philosophy (*Purg.* xxxiii 85-90). Boethius, though nominally a Christian, was emphatically a non-Christian writer. The Ethics of Aristotle, and the Physics and Metaphysics of Averrhoes, led him, it might be, to the four cardinal virtues of the Greek moralists, but not to the three supernatural graces of Faith, Hope, and Charity, or Love (*Purg.* i. 23,

xxxl. 103-111) He had forsaken the "fountain of living waters," and turned, for comfort and refreshment, to the "broken cisterns" that would "hold no water"

For a time, however, we have to follow the outer, and not the inner life. Comparing *V. N.* c. 35 with *Conv.* ii 13, it would seem that the first two years and a half after Beatrice's death on June 9, 1290, were spent in the philosophical studies of which I have spoken. It is probable enough that these were pursued at Bologna or Padua, the former being in high repute for the eminence of its lecturers on Aristotle and on the Civil Law. Francis of Accorso, mentioned in *H.* xv 110, as involved in the same condemnation with Brunetto, was one of the most conspicuous, while the poet Onesto, named by Dante as one of the early masters of Italian poetry and prose, would present himself as a pattern in other forms of culture (*V. E.* i 15). Here also he may have met Luitpold, afterwards Bishop of Bebenburg, one of the counsellors of Baldwin, Archbishop of Treves, the younger brother of Henry VII, who wrote a treatise, presumably on the same lines as the *de Monarchia*, with the title *De Regno et Imperio* (*Irmer*, p. 5). Nor were there wanting at Florence men who would attract the student by their width of knowledge in regions which his omnivorous intellect sought to explore, and in which he became a master. There was in his immediate neighbourhood Giovanni Villani, the historian. There was Taddeo, the great physician, the student of Hippocrates, the translator of Aristotle into Latin (*Par.* xii 83, *Conv.* i. 10). There was Salvino degli Armati, great in the study of optics and experiments with lenses, mastering the laws of reflection and refraction, on which Dante delighted to dwell (*Par.* ii 94-105), and famous as the inventor of spectacles\* (*Ferr. M. D.* ii 20), probably therefore welcomed by the poet, whose habits of study and brain excitement had affected his sight and confined him for many weeks to the seclusion of a darkened room (*V. N.* c. 40, *Conv.* iii. 9).† Brunetto, too, was still alive (*id.* 1294), though one

\* Spectacles appear, it will be remembered, in the works of the early Italian painters, as *sf.*, in Ghirlandajo's "Burial of St. Francis." Roger Bacon, however, mentions them as already in use in his time (*Op. Mag.* p. 377), and the Italian optician may possibly have owed his invention to what he heard from Dante of the teaching of his Master in physical science. Curiously enough, the then Bishop of Florence was also conspicuously shortsighted (*D. C.* i. p. 232).

† St. Lucia, it may be noted, was the patron saint to whom those who thus suffered naturally turned for help. Here, as I have noted on *H.* ii 97, we have another link connecting her with Beatrice and Dante.

thinks at this time the mask of the sensualist had fallen off, and that Dante would look on him with a saddened horror rather than with the earlier admiration. Gian della Bella and Dino Compagni could scarcely fail to be in some measure known to him. Guido Cavalcanti, who had married a daughter of Farinata degli Uberti, and to whom Dante dedicated his *Vita Nuova*, was still foremost among his friends.

In the *Convito*, however (ii 13), there is a significant passage which may indicate that Dante's mind at this time passed through oscillations of feeling which were natural to one who had suffered so much, and who had not yet found the haven where he would be. He says that he sought for wisdom not only in "the disputations of those who philosophised," but also "in the schools of the religious," and, as the word was then used, that term could only refer to the members of the religious orders, the Dominicans and Franciscans, who were then both preaching and lecturing, making converts and scholars, in well-nigh every university in Europe. With that fact we may connect a very early traditional interpretation of *H* xvi 106 (*Buli* in the 14th century), which sees in the "cord" with which the poet had girt himself to contend against the leopard (the symbol of the desire of the flesh and the pride of life), an allusion to his having, at one time, been drawn to connect himself with the Franciscan brotherhood, as a member of the Tertiary Order. The members of that Order were left free to engage in the business of the world and to keep the stations which they occupied in it (Elizabeth of Hungary and her husband, *e.g.*, were Tertiaries), and were, in fact, lay brothers, wearing the cord, but pledged only to lives of purity and devotion. An apparently independent tradition reports that he was buried, by his own desire, in the dress of the Tertiary order. There is, then, I believe, sufficient ground for assuming, as at least probable, that Dante was, at one time, in this *sturm und drang* period of his life, drawn to the Franciscan Order. The manifest devotion with which he tells the story of St Francis in *Par* xl implies an almost passionate admiration. Combine with these facts his acquaintance with the Umbrian regions which had been the scene of the Saint's early life and triumphs, with Perugia and Assisi (*Par* xl 43-54), and his probable presence with his friend Giotto in the latter city when the artist was painting the frescoes of the great Franciscan church there. Note the singularly



Dantesque symbolism of those frescoes, the Tower of Chastity with her true servants driving off the blind Cupid with his arrows, emblem of sensual love, into the abyss, and two figures approaching (on the left-hand side of the painting) as the last-arrived novices, in one of which, if I mistake not, we may find the familiar form, features, but slightly aged, and head-dress which we see in the Bargello portrait, the wedding of the Saint with Poverty (*Par* xi 58-78). Observe the Centaur (*II* xii. 56), cowed, in his brute strength, by the law of obedience, while Prudence (in its full Platonic sense as including all ethical wisdom) presents, after a Janus fashion, on one side her severity, and, on the other, her goodness \*—and the conclusion is, I think, legitimate, as far as any conclusion from circumstantial evidence can be, that there was some link closely connecting one period of Dante's life with the influence of the Franciscan Order. The question which meets us is, then, where were the schools of the "religious" of that Order most in repute, and the answer is at Paris and at Oxford, and of the possible periods of his studying at those universities as reported by Giovanni da Serravalle and implied by Boecaccio, this seems to me the most probable. The former reports (*Pref to Translation*), indeed,† that he performed all his exercises for the degree of Doctor of Theology at Paris, but had not sufficient money to pay the fees, and that, returning to Florence to obtain the funds required, he was afterwards hindered by his share in public affairs from ever completing his purpose. It will be admitted that *Par* xxiv., xxv., xxvi. read very largely like a reminiscence of an actual examination of this character. Anyhow, we are reminded of the description of him given in the epitaph by his friend Joannes de Virgilio (*Frat V D* p 318) —

"Dantes theologus, nullius dogmatis expertus"

At this period, then, or if not, at some earlier or later time, we have to think of Dante as a student in the Rue des Fouarres—the Haymarket of mediæval Paris—sitting with his fellows on the bundles of straw, which served as benches, listening to the syllogisms

\* I write with the photographs of the frescoes before me. A full description will be found in Landau's *Chr Art*, ii. pp 28-48. (Comp. *Purg* xxx 79-81, xxxii 4.)

† The MS of this translation is now in the British Museum Library, and I quote from personal inspection. A MS note in the fly leaf states that, during his stay in London, Dante had lodgings in Cheapside, but I have not succeeded in finding the passage in Serravalle's text.

of Sigier, which roused the ill-will of bigots because they were felt to be conclusive (*Par* x. 136), perhaps extending his travels, as Serravalle and Boccaccio say, to the Thames, London, Westminster Abbey, and Oxford, drawn thither by the scientific reputation which Roger Bacon, then in the closing years of his life, had left behind him at Paris, where he also had taught, like Sigier, *invulsi veri*, and had come under like suspicions (*Charles. Rog. Bac* p 37). \*

I return to more certain ground in his marriage with Gemma Donati in 1292, month uncertain. It was, as Boccaccio tells the tale (and he knew Dante's nephew well), a marriage made for him by his friends. There seems at most but slender ground for the conjecture of Sir Theodore Martin and Fraticelli that Gemma was the "gentle lady" who had looked on his sorrow with a comforting compassion, and that she married him knowing the history of his love for Beatrice. If she had been, it is probable that he would have given some hint of the fact, probable also that the marriage would have been a happier one. The hypothesis seems to have too much the nature of a novel, presenting to us the character of an irreproachable "Dante-Grandison." What seems likely is, that his friends were anxious about his physical and mental health, his negligent and Bohemian habits. It is curious that *Bocc* (*V. D*) notes that his wearing a beard (*Purg* xxxi 68 n) was one of the chief symptoms of those habits. What he wanted, they thought, as a cure for his half-hysterical emotions, was a wife who would keep him steady and bring him back to conventionalities. Of the life, age, character, looks of the lady they chose, we know next to nothing. Dante never mentions her, unless she be the "*donna gentile*," in prose or verse, and seems to have made no effort to see her after his banishment from Florence. Boccaccio describes her as a shrew, a Xanthippe whose husband was *not* a Socrates. We are left, if we follow him and the *servum pecus* of writers whom he led, to picture to ourselves a wretched home, the

\* Bardi's English business connexions (p 35 n) would facilitate such an expedition. There are passages in the *Comin* which at least suggest travels beyond London and Oxford (*Par* x 139 n, *Purg* xxxiii 76 n.) It may be noted that Fazio degli Uberti (grandson of Barnata) in his *Dittamondo*, a poem of the fourteenth century, names the scenes of the Arthurian legends—Guenevere's Tower, Merlio's Cave, and Camelot—as things that every traveller ought to see, and Camelot=South Cadbury, in Somerset. I may seem to be unduly influenced by local prepossessions, but to me it does not seem an incredible hypothesis that when Dante was in England, he may have been attracted by the fame of Peter Lighfoot, the maker of the clock, to visit Glastonbury (the Isle of Avaloo, the burial place of Arthur), and may have worshipped within the walls of my own Cathedral.

wife nagging at a husband whom she could not understand, the husband finding solace in successive flirtations, or worse. One or two thoughts may be pleaded in arrest of judgment. Boccaccio is as little to be trusted in his estimate of Dante as Athenæus in his estimate of Sophocles. It was just the kind of thing which such a writer, impure himself in thought, if not in life, would be certain to say. A railing accusation against marriage and women in general, and therefore in each particular instance, was entirely after his manner. It must at least be admitted that Dante's family of seven children, born within seven years, is *prima facie* evidence that the husband and the wife were never even on the verge of separation. His intimacy with her kinsman Forese (*Purg.* xxiii. 48, 76), though he looked back on it with regret as a descent into a lower level of thought and life than the mark of his high calling, is, at least, presumptive proof that he was on good terms with his wife and her family. It is probable enough that she did not understand him, but if so, that was an infirmity which she shared with the greater part of the human race. And, from the time of her husband's exile, when the eldest was but eight, she was left with the sole charge of her children's education, and their after lives bore witness that she did that work well, and brought them up to honour the father from whom the disaster of the time had divided them. On the whole, then, I sum up in favour of the defendant. If the marriage did not present the high pattern of a serene harmony like that which we have known in the life of the Wordsworths, the Southseys, the Longfellows, and others, it at least stands out in marked contrast with that of other men of letters. Dante did not, like Milton, write treatises on the Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce out of the bitterness of his own experience, nor, like Byron, pour a scathing invective on his wife in a licentious satire, nor, like Dickens, expose to public gaze the sorrows of a husband whose wife did not appreciate him as her sister did. It may have been a trial to Gemma to see him writing in the *Vita Nuova* the records of his past love, or to find poems dwelling on the beauty of a *pargoletta* (*B.* ix., *S.* xxxv.), and to be told that she was only philosophy, and that her "bright eyes" were "scientific demonstrations." There may have been differences of feeling rising out of the fact that Dante belonged to one Florentine faction (the *Bianchi*), and the Donati to another (the *Neri*), but whatever those differences may have been, the hus-

band had the wisdom to hide them beneath the veil of silence. It may be put to the credit of the wife that she acquiesced in their daughter being baptized with the name of Beatrice. Dante may, in like manner, be credited with the intention of including his wife, when he mourned over his exile (*Par.* xvii. 55), as involving separation from all that he held most dear. And as for the long continuance of that separation, it must be remembered that he had no home to offer her, that he could not rightly ask her to share the beggary of the lot which condemned him to eat the bread of others and mount their stairs (*Par.* xvii. 59), that she had to watch over the remnant of his fortunes, and to educate his children. Apart from the utterly untrustworthy statement of Boccaccio, the only evidence of the charges of sensual immorality brought against Dante are the facts (1) that he represents himself (*Purg.* xxvii. 46) as having to pass through the fire by which the souls of men are purified from that sin, (2) that he places in Beatrice's lips the reproach that he has turned from her to "some girl of little worth" (*pargoletta*) (*Purg.* xxxi. 59); (3) that he refers in *Purg.* xxiv. 37 to a Gentucca, and in *Canz.* iii. viii and the letter to Malaspina (*Frat. O. M.* 430) to other women who had comforted him. In regard to (1) and (2), I note that a sensitive conscience acting in this region is specially likely to emphasize deviations from purity in thought as well as act, to dwell more than others on a single instance in which he had yielded to temptation, and as to (3), that a man like Dante was not likely to perpetuate the memory of an adulterous love to after ages, or to dwell upon it in a letter to a noble-minded friend. I take the affection in these two cases to have been that of a pure friendship.

Anyhow the married life brought with it a certain measure of steadiness in pursuit and action. The poet recognised that he was also a citizen, that, as such, he had duties to perform, to find, as his philosophical studies had led him to seek, a logical basis for those duties other than the traditional watchwords of the Guelphs and Ghibellines, or the new-born animosities of the Neri and Bianchi.\*

\* It may be worth while noting that the names were identified with local factions rather than political principles. Two branches of the family of Cancellieri of Pistoia had a quarrel, into the details of which it is unnecessary to enter. One was headed by a Bianco and took the name of Bianchi—the other, by way of distinction, called themselves Neri. The faction spread, through Pistoian fugitives, into Florence, and soon every family took one side or the other. Their reception was as fatal to the peace of that city as that of the prisoners of Sphacteria had been to Athens in the Peloponnesian War (*J. Anc.* iv. 41). Corso Donati was

And so, over and above his work as a poet, which bore fruit in the sonnets and *canzoni* that find a place in the *Vita Nuova* and the *Convito*, and the studies which are represented by the list of names in *H.* iv. 136-144, in which we may almost see a catalogue of the student's library, he turned to the question what was the true ideal polity as regards the relations of Church and State, and he found the answer, afterwards embodied in the *de Monarchia*, in the position that each had its independent sphere of action, one leading to earthly and the other to heavenly completeness in human life, that each derives its authority from God, and within its sphere is supreme. His theory was therefore opposed alike to the Guelph principles of his fathers, so far as they represented what we have learnt to call the Ultramontanism of Gregory VII. and Innocent III. and to the democracy and plutocracy of Florence. It was equally opposed to the idea of the supremacy of the State over the Church in spiritual things which we have learnt to call Erastianism, and which had been asserted by the Emperors Henry IV. and Frederick II., and by Henry II. of England, which was to be asserted a few years later by Philip the Fair of France. It foreshadowed the teaching of Hooker (*E. P.* B. iii. and viii.) that the Church and the nation are, or ought to be, the same society, though each, for its own special function, is administered by different officers, or even that enunciated in Cavour's watchword of a "free Church in a free State." It was not an easy theory to work in the midst of all the manifold confusions of the time, and we cannot wonder that before long Dante found it necessary, by way of protest against "the falsehood of extremes," to form a party by himself (*Par.* xvii. 69). If we wonder that he who laid so great a stress on the priceless value of liberty (*Purg.* i. 71) should have chosen an absolute autocracy as his ideal form of polity, what we have now to trace will show that he had seen enough of representative government to be sick of it.

The state of Florence at the time when Dante entered on his life as a citizen was one of political agitation, caused in part, or at least aggravated, by commercial distress. In 1291 Acre had fallen before the arms of the Soldan of Babylon (*H.* xxvii. 89),

the acknowledged head of the Neri, Vieri dei Cerchi of the Bianchi. Ultimately the Bianchi developed into a revival of the old half-suppressed Ghibelline party, while the other, courting the favour of the Pope, boasted that they represented the old Guelph traditions of Florence.

and this had given a severe check to her Eastern traffic, and Philip of France, under the pretext of checking usury, had seized the persons and confiscated the property of the rich Florentines, who carried on the greater part of the commerce between France and Italy, and had establishments in both countries (*Ferr. M. D.* ii p 23) The change from a feudal aristocracy to one of wealth had been accomplished during the early part of the thirteenth century. The nobles of the city and its environs had to pull down their castles and come and live in the city. If they built houses there which had too military a character, they also were pulled down. The old forms of government, following in rapid succession by consuls, ancients, *Buonomini* (it would be profitless to go into the details which make the history of Florence like a chapter of Aristotle's *Politics*) had passed away. A final blow at feudalism was struck in 1282 by a law which limited all participation in the government of the city to those who had been enrolled in one of the seven Guilds of the greater Arts, which had created its wealth. The list of these arts is worth giving as showing the character of mediæval trade and manufacture. There were the seven greater arts—(1) Judges and notaries, (2) merchants of Calimala \* (3) money-changers, (4) wool-staplers, (5) silk-merchants, (6) physicians and apothecaries, (7) furriers. Out of these were chosen the *Priori delle Arti*, at first three, then six, then twelve, who held office, with almost supreme authority (I avoid the complications of the councils that were intended as checks and balances), for two months at a time. In the list of second-class arts we find butchers, boot-makers, builders, stone-masons, and second-hand clothes dealers, in the third, vintners, inn-keepers, oilmen, tanners, armourers, leather-sellers, carpenters, locksmiths, and bakers.

In 1292, probably, as I have said, as the result of the commercial distress, there was another revolutionary change brought about by Gian della Bella, who stirred up the *plebs* by dwelling on the grievances to which they were still subject, and, as one of the *Priori*, with the help of his colleagues and the *Poestà* (a foreign magistrate who was supposed to be free from the influence of local factions), Taddeo de Bruzati of Brescia (who will meet us again in

\* Two Greek etymologies are suggested for the word, (1) *καλὴς μῆλος* and (2) *καλὸν μῦλον*. It is explained by Trollope (*Hist. of Florence*, i. 175) as meaning the art of dressing and dyeing cloth of foreign manufacture. A Via Calimala is found in modern Florence.

connexion with the history of his own city), and the Captain of the People, Currado da Soncino of Milan, passed his memorable Ordinances of Justice. Among these was one which had a notable influence on Dante's life. The law which confined public offices to members of the greater arts had been evaded by a merely nominal enrolment. It was now enacted that no one should be elected as Prior who was not actually carrying on business in the "art" of his Guild. Thirty-three of the noblest families were excluded by name even from that access to public life, and the list was soon increased to seventy-two. A Gonfaloniere of justice was appointed to carry these and other like enactments against the excesses of the nobles into execution, and he was intrusted with the command of a National Guard of 4000 men. Boxes were kept in the bureaux of the Gonfaloniere and Captain of the People for anonymous complaints against men of position (*Nap* 1 345-351).

One result of this was that when Dante resolved to take his part in public life, he had to qualify for one of these Guilds, and, as was natural in a student of natural science, he chose that of the Physicians and Apothecaries. It lies in the nature of the case that admission to that Guild implied an examination. As has just been shown, it involved, in Dante's case, an actual practice in the profession. And of both studies and practice his works supply sufficient traces. His library contained Hippocrates and Galen and Dioscorides, probably also translations of the medical treatises of Avicenna and Averrhoes (*H* iv 139-143), possibly the writings of Jewish physicians, and those of the great medical school of Salerno. He became acquainted with the foulness of Italian hospitals (*H* xxix 46), with the symptoms of leprosy (*H* xxix 73-84), dropsy (*H* xxv 52-57), fever (*H* xxx. 107), looked with compassion on what is perhaps the most piteous of all sights, the frenzied delirium of a child (*Par* 1 102). He observed the details of the treatment of one special class of disease at the Baths of Bulicame (*H*. xiv 79). He mastered, by dissection or by books, the mysteries of embryology (*Purg* xxv. 37-72), and with them faced the question of the origin of the human soul, the theories of creation or transmission (*Purg* xvi 35-90). He learnt to pay special honour to the "beloved physician" who wrote the Acts of the Apostles (*Purg*. xxix. 137). But the apothecary's business in the thirteenth century was not confined to drugs. It

included spices of all kinds, precious stones and jewels generally (*Frat. V. D.* p. 114), and the pigments used by artists, probably also surgical and optical instruments, such as the newly invented spectacles. In all these regions Dante speaks the language of an expert. We have the list of gems or pigments in *Purg.* vii. 73-75, allusions to pearls (*Par.* iii. 14), sapphires (*Purg.* i. 13; *Par.* xxiii. 101), emeralds (*Purg.* vii. 75, xxix. 125, *Par.* xxxi. 116), diamonds (*Purg.* ix. 105), porphyry (*Purg.* vii. 101). In all these things the Florentine apothecaries were, like those of Venice, Pisa, and Genoa, the channels of traffic between the East and West, between India and Persia on the one hand, France and England on the other.

As one of Gian della Bella's ordinances fixed thirty as the minimum age for admission to public functions, Dante had to wait till 1295 (some biographers say till 1297) before his name was inscribed in the Register of the Guild of the *Speziali e Medici*. The fact that it was entered as that of *Dante d'Alighieri poeta Fiorentino*, shows that his literary reputation was by that time established. In 1296 and 1297 we find him taking part in the debates of the Council of the Captain of the People, otherwise known as that of the Hundred Counsellors, but the subject of the debate is not recorded (*Frat. V. D.* p. 135). In 1299 he had so acquired the confidence of his fellow-citizens as to be employed as an ambassador to the Commune of S. Gimignano to settle a dispute, into the details of which we need not enter. Of this embassy we have documentary evidence (*Frat. V. D.* p. 130). Others, reported by some writers (Filelfo, Balbo), to Siena, Genoa, Perugia, Venice, and the kings of Naples, France, and Hungary, if not altogether relegated to the region of the fabulous, must be looked on as very doubtful.

So the years passed on in study and action, political and professional, the great work of immortalising Beatrice being the goal to which much of his study of the language and literature of the several provinces of Italy, as in the *V. E.*, of the principles of polity, as in the *de Monarchia*, of knowledge in general, as in the *Convito*, were directed. To this period we may assign probably the composition of the *V. N.*, in part, perhaps, of the *Convito*, though neither that nor the *V. E.* was completed till after his exile. In 1300 we enter on a more critical period of his life.



That year was memorable throughout Europe, and especially throughout Italy, for the celebration of the first Jubilee by Boniface VIII, who ascended the papal throne in 1294, after the abdication which, on the one hand, placed Celestine V. in the Calendar of Saints, and, on the other, consigned him to the perpetual infamy of "*il gran rifiuto*" (*H* iii 60). There is no direct evidence that Dante went to that jubilee as a pilgrim. On the other hand, the indirect circumstantial evidence is as strong as it can well be. He describes, with the vividness of an eyewitness, the ordered march of the visitors as they crossed the bridge of St Angelo (*H* xviii 29), the awestruck wonder of pilgrims from a far country as they looked on the Holy Naphin of St. Veronica (*Par* xxxi 104), or gazed "at Rome and all her noble works" (*Par* xxvi 35) from the Piazza of St John Lateran. He himself had felt, as he walked her streets, that the very stones of her walls called for a special reverence (*Conv* iv 5), and these indications fall in with the strong antecedent probability that such a keen observer would wish to be a sharer in what so affected the whole of Western Christendom, that it was reckoned that upwards of 200,000 foreigners were commonly in Rome during the whole period. I do not assume that he would be led to go by his feelings as a devout Catholic. It was precisely the period of his life when that element was weakest in it. I do not know how far back the proverb of the later *renaissance*,\* "*Ubi tres medici, duo athei*," may be traced, but it was true in the thirteenth as in later centuries, that while, on the one hand, the study of natural science tended to emancipate men's minds from popular superstitions, it not seldom drifted into materialism, scepticism, Pantheism. And Dante was drifting with the current. He had substituted, as he tells us in the *Convito*, philosophy for faith, classical literature for the Vulgate and the Fathers, the dream of a "celestial Athens" where Stoics and Epicureans, Platonists and Aristotelians, might dwell together in unity (*Conv* iii 14) for the

\* The following passage from Massinger, quoted in Southey's *Doctor*, is suggestive as a comment on the proverb —

"I have heard, how true  
I know not, most physicians, as they grow  
Greater in skill, grow less in their religion,  
Attributing so much to natural causes  
That they have little faith in that they cannot  
Deliver reason for."

heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the saints of God. With perhaps the *ne plus ultra* of allegorising interpretation, he finds in the three Maries who went to the sepulchre of the Christ types of the first three of those schools, all seeking the Christ, i.e., true blessedness, in the grave of the world, in which they do not find it (*Conv.* iv. 22). The unbelief of some, at least, of his heroes and friends, Frederick II, Manfred, the Cavalcanti, had eaten into the freshness and fulness of his faith, and he found himself asking what need was there of the Incarnation and the Passion? Were not the ways of God in the work of redemption and election unequal and unrighteous (*Par.* xix 70-114)? The questions might go further, were miracles possible or credible (*Conv.* iii. 7)? was there a life after death? or were the "*subterranea regna*" to be classed among the dreams that "*vix pueri credunt*" (*Juv. Sat.* ii. 149)? It would not have been strange if he had heard debated in the schools of Paris or Oxford (*Mon. Franc.* p. 634), the more tremendous question, *Utrum sit Deus*. He had lost himself in the dark forest, and, though he saw a rose of dawn on the mountain summit, yet he was sore let and hindered in his attempt to climb. He had made shipwreck of his faith and was tossed to and fro in the deep waters (*H.* i. 22). From this misery he was, he tells us, delivered, and he fixes, with a precision of which the only natural explanation is that it represents a fact, the Holy Week and Easter of A.D. 1300 as the time of his deliverance. And he was then at Rome, probably for his first visit there. His first impressions were, we may well believe, as they have been those of thousands, a sense of shame and burning indignation at the greed and license of the priesthood; the nepotism and emony of bishops (*H.* xix); the ambition, love of power, inner dishonesty and untruth which he found in Boniface VIII. (*H.* xix 53, xxvii 70). But there was also the spell of what was even then the fateful city; there were the traditions of classical and Christian antiquity, the memories of Papal and Imperial greatness. Those memories stirred up the mind of his friend Villani, who was at Rome at the same time, to write, so far as in him lay, the history of the city which they owned as mother and which they so passionately loved (*Vill.* viii. 36).\* And Giotto was with him, painting the Pope (the picture now

\* The preface to my edition of Villani (*Tricento*, 1852) states that the two friends met at the tomb of the Apostles, and swore that they would each accomplish the works which they had

hangs in the Church of St. John Lateran) in the act of proclaiming the Jubilee, and the *Navicella*, which, having been the glory of the choir of the old St. Peter's, was transferred by Leo X. to the portico of the new, sharing in some at least of the poet's aspirations, embodying in his art-creations the suggestions of his teeming fancy. This then was the city of Julius and Augustus, in some sense, whatever their birthplace, of Virgil and Lucan, and Ovid and Statius, of St. Peter and St. Paul, of Linus and Anacletus, of the rise, decay, corruption of the Church of Christ. And it was Holy Week, and pilgrims were crowding the city for their great Easter communion.

At such a time, kindled by the contagion of their enthusiasm, memories of the past would, I conceive, rush in upon his mind, of Virgil as his guide to earthly wisdom, of St. Mary and St. Lucia as the objects of his boyhood's reverence, of the Matilda in whom he had seen the type of a life blessed and blessing others in the cheerfulness of its activity, of Beatrice, who had been also the symbol of a contemplative and devout holiness, who had been, while she lived, the guardian angel of his life, and of whom he loved to think as still watching over him, and interceding for him. And with this there would be the remembrance of men and women whom he had known—of Brunetto, and Casella and Forese, and the elder Cavalcante and Buonconte, and Cunizza, and Charles Martel, of others of whom he had read or heard, Frederick II and Manfred, and Farnata, St. Francis, and St. Dominic. Where were they now? In what region of the unseen world did their spirits dwell apart, each receiving according as his work had been? And what would be his own state were the summons of death to come to him then and there? Had he not discovered life, as most men find it, to be a lie (*Purg* xix 106), the earthly goods, *denari o dignità* (*Conv* i. 9), for which he and most men were striving to be as *vanitas vanitatum*? Can we not conceive of the solemn ritual of Holy Week as coming with a marvellous power to stir to the very depths a soul such as Dante's at such a crisis as this? If, according to the rule of the Western Church, he made his confession before that Easter Communion, and fell under the hands of some Franciscan expert, such as he, a Tertiary, would naturally seek, skilled in

severally planned. In the absence of a reference, I am compelled to set the statement down as belonging to the "romance of history."

dealing with the diseases of men's souls, would it not be as the unveiling of all secret things, leading to the cry for pardon and for peace, the craving for the twofold office of the keys of the Church's ministry (*Purg* ix. 115-129)? Would not the *Vexilla regis prodeunt* of Passion Sunday lead to the question whether he had been serving under the true King or under the Lord of Hell (*H.* xxxiv. 1)? Would not the services for Good Friday and Easter Eve bring before his thoughts the descent into Hades, the "harrowing of Hell," the mysteries of the threefold regions behind the veil? When Easter Eve came, would not its anthems, *Collocavit me in obscuris, sicut mortuos sæculi*, and *Elevamini portæ æternales*, and its *Domine, abstraxisti ab inferis animam*, and *Factus sum sicut homo sine adiutorio, inter mortuos liber*, come to him with a new power, and the Holy Week lessons from the Lamentations of Jeremiah (already so familiar, *V. N* 31) be something more than a wailing cry over a buried earthly love, and Easter with its *Surrexit de sepulchro Dominus*, its *Alleluia*, and its *In exultu Israel de Ægypto* (*Purg* ii 46), speak of a more than earthly deliverance from the house of bondage? This I take to have been the history of Dante's conversion, of the *genesis* into form and shape of the thought which the close of the *Vita Nuova* presents to us in its all but earliest germ, the conclusion of the second drama of the great Trilogy of his life. The third drama of the Trilogy is one of many acts.

## IV.

## THE GREAT TRILOGY—(III.A) CONFLICT AND DEFEAT.

I have shown that there is strong circumstantial evidence that Dante was at Rome in the early months of 1300. Starting with that probability as a provisional working hypothesis, it has the merit of throwing light on his subsequent political action. To understand that action one must go back to the time when Boniface VIII first began to take part in the affairs of Florence. The recent researches of Guido Levi in the archives of the Vatican, published in the *Arch. della Soc Rom di Storia Patria*, vol. v., and reproduced by Bartoli (v. c. 6), throw a light on the transactions of that time for which I am bound to express my thankful-

ness to the latter, all the more because I have so often felt constrained to differ from him in his treatment of many questions connected with Dante's life and character. It will be remembered that Gian della Bella, after carrying his Ordinances of Justice, had withdrawn from Florence, under pressure from the nobles, in 1294. The revolutionary movement was, however, soon followed by a reaction, and the voluntary exile was turned into actual banishment. The reformer was condemned in his absence for contumacy, and died in France (*Vill* viii. 8). In the same year Boniface ascended the Papal throne, and soon saw in the divisions of Florence an opening for extending his power. The first trace of his interference is a Bull dated January 23, 1296, addressed to the Commune, denouncing Gian della Bella in strong terms as the author of strife, and forbidding, under pain of excommunication, any attempt to recall him. The prohibition backed the policy of the aristocrats and plutocrats of Florence, whatever might have been their origin, and Dante's sympathies, as the whole tone of the *Mon* (i. 14) and the *Conv.* (iv. 14, 27) shows, were with the people as against either the ancestral or the moneyed nobility. The charm of his ideal Empire was that it implied equality and fraternity, if not an absolute liberty, in its subjects. The Bull so far attained its end that Gian della Bella was not recalled. Early in 1300 we find three citizens of Florence, among them the Lapo Salterello of *Par* xv. 128, then, in May, one of the Priori, accusing three Florentine citizens, then at Rome, of plotting against the freedom of their city. As Lapo was afterwards included in the same sentence of banishment with Dante (*D. C.* p. 173), it may be inferred that he was opposed to Donatì and the Pope, and that the three Florentines at Rome were suspected of favouring the Pope's projects. They were condemned to pay large fines. The Pope at once wrote to the Signoria of Florence demanding that the judgment should be quashed. The accusation was aimed at him—even him. Other letters followed in April 24 and May 24 to the Bishop of Florence (*Bart.*, *ut supra*). Boniface denounces Lapo for not recognising his supreme authority as the Vicar of Christ in things temporal as well as spiritual. His is the final court of appeal. He cites Lapo and six others to appear before him at Rome, to be judged according to their deserts. In the interval between these two letters he had written to the Duke of Saxony, as Elector of the Empire, to use his influence

with Albert of Austria to bring about the restoration of the rebellious city to full submission to the Holy See (*ibid* )

I assume that these facts were known, wholly or in part, to Dante when he was at Rome in the April and May of 1300, and that he determined, as far as lay in his power, to oppose the Pope's intrigues. He hastened back to Florence, and was elected by the outgoing Priori, Salterello being one, with whom the nomination rested, as one of their successors, to hold office from June 15 to August 15. His colleagues were men altogether unknown and of no weight, and he was master of the situation. To that period he looked back in after years as the beginning of all the trouble of his life (*Frat. V. D. p. 123*) The next move in the chess-game was that Boniface, in that same June, sent the Cardinal Matteo d' Acquasparta in the character of a pacificator, really, of course, to support the Neri Guelphs, to counteract the Bianchi with their new Ghibellinism, all the more dangerous to the Papacy because it was identified no longer with feudalism, but, in idea at least, with liberty, and insisted on Church reforms. Dante and his colleagues accordingly turned a deaf ear to the Cardinal's proposals, and adopted a line of their own. They would act with a rigorous impartiality and banish the leaders of the two factions. The Donati or Neri party, including Corso himself, were sent to Castello della Pieve, the Bianchi, including the Cerchi and the poet's friend Guido Cavalcanti, to Sarzana. We note that the latter, allowed to return to Florence with others of the same party on the ground of failing health, caused by the unhealthiness of the locality, died in the autumn of the same year (*Vill* viii. 42). This was the one memorable act in Dante's official life \* It was enough to make him the object of a life-long enmity. He was, however, too strong, and had too large a following to be attacked at once. One indication of his prominence in civic matters is the fact that in April 1301 he was named as a Commissioner of Public Works to superintend the widening and improvement of streets near the Borgo Allegri (*Bart. v. 119*).

Plots, however, were thickening. Corso Donati, the *gran barone* of Florence, the Catiline of the small republic, who had gained for himself and for his house the ill-omened sobriquet of the *Malefami* (*D. C. p. 267*), had not accepted his banishment tamely,

\* Possibly his breaking one of the fonts in the Baptistry of St. John (*H. xix. 20*) may have been another

and was determined to avenge himself on the man by whom it had been brought about. He went straight to Rome, offered his services to the Pope, for whom he had already acted as governor of one of the cities of Romagna (*Faur.* i. 169), and implored his intervention. Boniface caught eagerly at the opening thus presented. It fell in with a wider scheme which had already presented itself to his subtle and daring mind. He would play the old Papal game of dividing and governing, and get through France what he was not likely to obtain from the Empire. Albert of Hapsburg, though not actively aggressive, took little or no part, for good or evil, in the affairs of Italy (*Purg.* vi. 97). Philip the Fair promised to be, as Boniface found afterwards to his cost, one of the strongest kings of Europe, and at this crisis of 1300 the two were allied by what seemed to be a common interest. Boniface had acted as arbitrator between Philip and Edward I. He had assigned the crown of Hungary to Charles Martel of the house of Anjou. He had excommunicated Albert. Philip might well appear as the "dearest and most obedient son of the Church" (*Milm. L. C.* vii. 88). Those whom Dante called the new Pilate and the leader of the new Pharisees (*Purg.* xx. 91, *II.* xxvii. 85) were confederate together. In Dante's imagery, the giant and the harlot were caressing one another in the chariot which was the symbol of the Church (*Purg.* xxxii. 153). And Philip had a brother, Charles of Valois, Duke of Alençon, who had married the daughter of Baldwin, the Latin Emperor of the East. That prince (*Sans Terre* or "Lackland," as men called him) was in search of a patrimony, and, like other princes, in earlier or later times, in like circumstances, was ready to go anywhere and do anything for one, or that failing, for its equivalent in hard cash. On that prince accordingly the Pope cast his eye, as likely to be a convenient tool with which to work out his design of bringing the cities of Tuscany under Papal control. He had prepared the way by a letter to the French clergy dated November 21 (*Weg.* p. 149, from *Tost.*, ii. 292), in which, ostensibly dwelling on the duty of a new Crusade to recover Acre from the Soldan (*H.* xxvii. 89), he urges the necessity of pacifying Italy, especially Tuscany, the cities of which (obviously Florence is pointed at) were in rebellion against their mother the Church, and Sicily, as a preliminary measure. Charles was accordingly invited to appear in Italy, in the character of a pacificator (*Pacificus*). The plan began to be talked of at Rome, and

the Neri in Florence whispered the threats and the hopes which sprang out of the conspiracy. The Bianchi were alarmed. As a party, they were weak in character and will. The five Priori who had been in office with Dante were absolute nobodies. The Cerchi were so timid and vacillating in the self content of their riches, that they are believed by many to have sat for the portrait of the neutrals of *H. iii.* 34-51 (*Church. E. R.* p. 28), Vieri or Torrignano, leading members of the house, to have been the original of the *gran rifiuto* (*H. iii.* 60). Salterello had ability and energy, but his character, if we may trust Dante's estimate of it, was profligate and vicious (*Par. xv.* 128). The poet already felt the isolation of which he afterwards spoke as forced upon him by the worthlessness of his associates, and when it was proposed that he should go to Rome on their behalf to countermine the plots of Corso Donati, asked in a tone of almost sublime egotism, "If I go, who is to remain? if I remain, who is to go?"\* (*Bocc. V. D.*)

In the meantime the schemers were working underground, and officially the councils of Florence were still discussing the proposals of the Cardinal of Acquasparta. During the early months of 1301, accordingly, we find entries in the minutes of the Council of the Twelve Greater Arts of proposals for giving the election of the Priori and the Gonfaloniere of Justice a more popular character (April 14), which were proposed or supported by Dante; and in those of June 19th, when the Council of the Hundred (an Assembly of Notables) met together with that of the Greater Arts to discuss the proposal of the Cardinal that Florence should send a contingent of one hundred men to the Papal army in Romagna—a proposal the smallness of which indicates with sufficient clearness that it was of the "thin end of the wedge" order—one member, obviously of the Neri party, moved an affirmative resolution. Another—one, I surmise, of the Cerchi trimmers—proposed that the question should be adjourned. But we read in the brief record, "*Dante Alagherni consuluit quod de servitio faciendo Domino Papæ nihil fiat.*" That special joint meeting seems to have broken up without a division. But on the same day, probably immediately afterwards, the Council of the Hundred held another separate meeting, and the same resolu-

\* The biographers are, for the most part, so vague and confused on the subject of this mission as almost to warrant Bartoli's scepticism (*V.* 131) as to whether it has a place in history. I have endeavoured, as far as may be, to fasten on the solid nucleus of a document or a date, and to place the facts thus brought before us in their right order.



tion was proposed, with a limitation of the service of the troops sent to the coming kalends of September. Again we find the record "*Dante Alagherni consuluit quod de seruitio Domino Papæ faciendo nihil fiat.*" The motion was carried by forty-eight against thirty-two. A subsequent resolution, which followed logically, for a grant of three thousand gold *lire* to defray the expenses of the troops, was carried by eighty votes against one solitary dissentient. It is not difficult, I think, to conjecture whose was the hand that put the negative ball into the ballot-box. Dante may have remembered how Farnata had stood out alone against his fellow-Ghibellines when the existence of Florence was at stake (*H. x* 91), and resolved that he would have neither part nor lot in the discreditable transaction (*Frat. V D* pp 135-138). Later on we have another meeting of the larger or collective Council, to deliberate on the question of maintaining Gian della Bella's Ordinances of Justice inviolate. Here, unfortunately, the minutes are imperfect, and we have only the tantalising entry "*Dante Alagherni consuluit*" . . . Apparently the meeting ended in accepting a motion that "*predicta omnia*," *sc.* the Ordinances and the Statutes of the People should be left to the care of the Podestà, the Captain, the Priori, and the Gonfaloniere.

The extracts thus given agree with the statement of Dino Compagni (p 254) that the embassy to Rome in which Dante took part, with three others, was sent by the Priori who held office from 15th August to 15th October 1301, and make it probable that he started for his journey to Rome in the last-named month. It is probable, I think, that the Neri were as glad of his going as those who sent him, possible even that they made a show of assent and consent to it. They feared his presence at Florence as much as their opponents hoped from his presence at Rome. He little thought, as he started on his journey, that he was never to enter the gates of the city or see his wife again, or what long years of suffering and poverty and disappointment that embassy would bring with it. His "beautiful St. John" and the stone in the Piazza of the Duomo—which, as the *Sasso di Dante*, was to become memorable to after ages—these were to know him no more.

I am writing a life of Dante, not a history of Florence, and I will content myself with the briefest summary of what passed there after his departure. The Priori who took office on October 15th

(Dino Compagni being one) sought to reconcile the two factions, not as Dante had done, by impartial coercion, and banishing the turbulent leaders on both sides, but by a process of "levelling upwards" and division of spoils, public offices being shared equally by the two parties. It was one of the half-measures characteristic of men who, like the Cerchi, had not the courage of their convictions, and only tempted the Neri to bolder action. They held a meeting (date uncertain, but probably about this time) in the Church of the Trinità, drew up an address to the Pope and Charles, representing that the Bianchi were Ghibellines, enemies alike of the Papal See and of France (this probably grew out of the views which Dante then was known to hold, and which then, or at a later date, were embodied in the *de Monarchiâ*), and requested Charles to lose no time in coming to their assistance. Charles had not, up to this time, shown any great haste. He had crossed the Alps with a French army in August 1301, had passed by Pistoia and Florence without action, though the former was in the possession of the Bianchi, and gone on to confer with the Pope at Anagni (*Weg.* 151). From thence, after receiving instructions to settle Tuscany before he meddled with Sicily, he passed to Siena, received an embassy of the Florentines, who brought with them 3000 gold florins, and of the Bianchi, whom he soothed with pacific assurances, and finally entered Florence on November 1. There he repeated, with solemn protestations, his announcement that he had only come as the restorer of peace. The banished Neri, however, followed him in large numbers, the Bianchi were afraid to leave their houses. Corso Donati forced an entrance into the city on November 5, and the *gran barone* was received with loud *vivats*. The houses of the Bianchi, Dante's included, were sacked, and many burnt. Plunder was the order of the day, and the rich became poor, and the poor rich with ill-gotten gain. The Priori were deposed. Legal prosecutions followed on mob violence, and the leaders of the Bianchi were condemned as traitors and rebels, and punished with confiscation of their property and with exile (*Vul.* viii. 39-42, *D C B.* 1).

These violent measures went beyond the intentions of the policy of Boniface, and the Cardinal of Acquasparta was again sent, to play once more the part of a mediator, to find himself thwarted by Charles and Donati, to launch the *brutum fulmen* of an inter-

dict. Dante had remained at Rome when the other ambassadors had returned to Florence, and a remarkable passage in *Purg.* xxxii. 155 suggests the thought that the Pope's last step had been, in part, owing to his influence. It is certain, at any rate, that he was singled out for attack by the Neri party, now triumphant, with a specially vindictive malignity. Sentence against him was given by Cante de' Gabrielli of Gubbio, who, as a tool of the Donati party, had entered Florence in the train of Charles of Valois (*D C.* p. 158), and had been chosen as Podestà. It is dated January 27, 1302. It condemns Dante Alighieri and three of his colleagues in their two months' tenure of office in 1300, on no other evidence than common report, as guilty of extortion, embezzlement, corruption, all summed up in the technical term *baratteria*, of having resisted the Pope and Charles, and expelled the Neri, who were faithful servants of the Church. They had been cited to appear and take their trial (four days had been allowed between the citation and the decree), and had not come. They were now fined 5000 florins each for their contumacy. They were to restore their ill-gotten gains. If they did not pay, their property was to be confiscated. They were banished for two years, and declared incapable of ever holding any public office. The triumph of Donati was complete. He had done more than exact the "eye for an eye," exile for exile. He had, he thought, succeeded in branding the name of his great opponent with indelible disgrace. After forty days (March 10) the sentence was republished on the ground that the accused had failed to purge themselves from contumacy, with the addition that if they were found on Florentine territory they were to be burnt alive. The last sentence included, it may be noted, Lapo Salterello (*Frat V. D.* pp. 147-152).

How, we ask, had Dante spent the three or four months he had passed in Rome before this sentence was promulgated? Imagination may picture the meeting of the Poet and the Pope, each with an indomitable will and love of power, each, in his way, an idealist, holding incompatible theories, but all that we are told is that the Pope summoned him and his fellow-ambassadors, scolded them for their obstinacy, and promised them his benediction if they were obedient (*D C.* p. 254). Two were to return to Florence, he and one other remained at Rome for further instructions. I have hinted above that the pacific mission of the Cardinal of Acquasparta

may perhaps be traced to his influence. Dante represents himself in *Purg.* xxxii. 155 as having attracted the favouring glances of the harlot who represents the Papacy, and so exposed her to the jealousy and cruelty of her giant lover. He flattered himself, that is, that he had done something to break up that unholy alliance of the evil powers of the Papacy and France. With the tendency natural to a man of letters who drifts into the transactions of *la haute politique*, he traced (not wholly without ground, though, it may be, exaggerating the extent of his influence) the outrages of Anagni and the Babylonian exile of Avignon to the disruption of which he had been the cause. Profound as was his antipathy to Boniface in his pervading simony, his grasping ambition, his skill in using others as his tools to their own damnation (*H* xix. 53, xxvii. 70-123), his persistent vindictiveness against the house of Colonna, he could yet look on him with a certain pity, as his wrath kindled into a white heat against the new Pilate, who, in the case of the Templars and the Pope, had shown himself yet more pitiless and base. (*Purg* xx 85-93 *Comp Frat. O M.* iii 404.)

Giotto, we may remember, was still at Rome during Dante's stay, and the intercourse of the two friends was, we cannot doubt, renewed. I conjecture, though I cannot prove, that the poet went during that time to Naples, that he learnt the traditions as to the death of Manfred and his burial by the Verde (*Purg* iii. 127-131) on the spot, that he thus visited the great Benedictine monastery of Monte Cassino, and became acquainted with the Vision of Fra Alberigo, which was the most precious of its treasures (*Par.* xxi. 37), that he formed his estimate of the "cripple of Jerusalem" (*Purg* vii. 27, xix. 127), Charles II., then on the throne of Naples, from personal knowledge, and learnt to contrast the pedant Prince Robert with the flower of chivalry whom he had known and loved in Charles Martel (*Par* viii. 55, 145). The medical school at Salerno, too, I can scarcely doubt, would attract one who, both practically and theoretically, was interested in the studies which had made it famous. And to this period in Dante's life I assign, not conjecturally, the interesting episode in his life connected with the friendship between him and Immanuel ben Salomo of Rome. That scholar, son of a Rabbi of repute, was born *circa* 1270.\* He

\* Jewish physicians, it may be noted, were much employed in the Middle Ages by royal personages, and even popes. Benjamin of Tudela names the school of Salerno, which he

was conspicuous among his fellow-Jews for his literary culture. With a quaint, cynical humour which reminds one of Heine, he wrote many minor poems, which he collected under the title of "Machberoth"\*. The last of its twenty-eight sections or groups of poems is a vision of Tophet and Eden (it is significant that the Jew does not acknowledge a Purgatory), which presents so many points of resemblance to Dante's Hell and Paradise, that it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that one borrowed from the other, or probably that they compared notes, and that their borrowing was reciprocal. Immanuel is guided in his perplexity, not by Virgil, but by the prophet Daniel. He, too, hears in the gates of Hell the cry that those who enter in must abandon every hope (*H* III. 9). He places Plato, Aristotle, Hippocrates, Galen in his Tophet (*H* IV. 132-144). He compares the adulteresses to "doves driven by the storm" (*H* V. 82). He, too, places, as Dante does, two righteous heathen in his Eden, and they are not Trajan and Rhipeus (*Par.* XX. 44, 68), but Cyrus and Pharaoh's daughter. Prophets greet him as their fellow, and place him high above all commentators (*H* IV. 100-102). He, too, sees the avaricious and the prodigal grouped together, and crying "Give, give!" in their thirst for gain (*H* VII. 30), and finds in Tophet, as Dante found Brunetto (*H* XV. 30), one whom he had loved and honoured upon earth. One comes to him and Daniel in the sackcloth and ashes of a penitent, as Statius comes to Dante and Virgil, and joins them in their pilgrimage (*Purg.* XXI. 85). He cites, in the notes in his numerous commentaries, Dante's favourite writers—Augustine, Albert of Cologne, and Aquinas. Daniel, after guiding the poet through the mysteries of the unseen world, and charging him to record them for the good of mankind, vanishes, as Virgil vanishes in *Purg.* XXX. 49. Immanuel, after a vain search for him, wakes from his dream, and so the poem ends. The coincidences thus indicated have led the eminent scholar Theodor Paur, whose paper in the *D. Gesell* (III. pp. 423-462) I am now epitomising, to the con-

cluded in 1172, as having the highest reputation among the children of Edom (= Latin Christendom) (Hamilton's *Hist. of Madame*, s. 323). It is significant that the Jews of Salerno were placed under the special care of the Archbishop of that city. The interest of common studies would, I conceive, naturally draw Dante into intercourse with the *savants* of that race there or elsewhere.

\* The word occurs in the Hebrew of 1 Chron. XXV. 3 and 2 Chron. XXXIV. 11, and is rendered by the A.V. as "joinings" in (1), "couplings" in (2). As a title it was probably intended to suggest the idea of "analogies" or "parables." Comp. Etheridge, *Jerusalem and Tiberias*, pp. 288, 385, Jost, *Judenk.* III. 82.

clusion that Immanuel meant his guide Daniel to stand for Dante, and others (whom Paur, however, does not follow) to the conjecture that the fragmentary knowledge of Hebrew, as shown in the cry of Plutus (*H.* vii. 1), in that of Nimrod (*H.* xxxi. 67), in the Osanna, Sabaoth, and Malachoth of *Par* vii 1-3, in the discussion as to *El* and *Eli* in *Par.* xxvi. 136, and *V. E.* i. 4, may have come to him from his Jewish friend.

The assumption that there was a friendship between the two men is confirmed by four sonnets, two of which passed between Bosone da Gubbio and Immanuel, two between Bosone and Cino da Pistoia, whether Dante's friend, or a *doppelgänger* of the same name, is open to conjecture. In the first pair, Bosone writes to condole with Immanuel on two sorrows which had fallen on him in the same year—one the death of wife or child, the other that of Dante—and comforts him with the thought that Dante has found a resting-place in Paradise. In the other, the actual—or *pseudo*—Cino writes to Bosone that his friends Dante and Immanuel are both in Hell, sharing with Alessio Interminei the doom of the flatterers (*H.* xviii. 122). The thought thus expressed is so entirely at variance with the prevailing tone of the poems of Cino da Pistoia, who consoles Dante on the death of Beatrice (*Canz.* vii), calls him his beloved brother (*S.* xci.), and writes a loving *In Memoriam* Canzone on his death (*C.* cxii.), that one would fain reject the idea that he could have written the sonnet just referred to. But whoever wrote it, it comes in as evidence that Bosone, Immanuel, and Dante were looked on as a triad of friends, and as Immanuel lived at Rome, it is a natural inference that Dante's friendship with him began in that city.

The public affairs in which Dante took part have necessarily occupied a prominent position in this section of his biography. I do not therefore suppose that his intellectual literary life was at a stand-still. The *V. N.* had probably been composed, and in some sense published,\* about 1297. Parts of the *Convito* reflecting the transition period of his mental history were, in the judgment of experts, composed before his exile. The thought which closes the *V. N.*, and which took a more definite shape in the conversion

\* It has to be remembered that this word had then a very different connotation from that which it has in current use now. Some ten or twelve transcribed copies on parchment, one or two presented to distinguished patrons, the rest left for sale on the shelves of a *stationarius* or bookstall-keeper at a university, that was the mediæval idea of publication.

crisis of Easter, 1300, was not likely to remain dormant for many months. It is probable, as stated in the letter of Frate Ilario, that he at first contemplated writing a Latin poem after the manner of Virgil. That such a poem would have been a masterpiece in its way, catching the Virgilian ring, the Latin Eclogues which Dante wrote in the last year of his life give sufficient proof. He had formed a *bello stilo* on the model of Virgil (*H.* 1. 87), which, though it afterwards fashioned his Italian verse, bore, we can scarcely doubt, its first fruits in Latin. If so, we may rejoice that he abandoned a design which could scarcely have had any other result than an Epic after the manner of Petrarch's *Africa*, read by a few scholars at the time, and remaining on the shelves of libraries to gather the dust of centuries. We collect from the *V. E.* (1. 16), from the *Conv.* (1. 5), which, though written in exile, embraces the researches and the thoughts of years, what were the motives which led him to change his plan. He craved for a larger audience than the narrow circle of scholars or of pedants who were the only readers of Latin verses (*Conv.* 1. 8). He felt that the reputation he had gained as "*poeta Fiorentino*" had been acquired not by being the echo of an older poet, but by singing as the sweet spirit of Love, the dictator, moved him, and in his mother-tongue (*Purg.* xxiv 52). If he was called, as he felt himself called, to be the "poet of righteousness," as his friend Cino da Pistoia was "the poet of love" (*V. E.* 11. 2), he sought with an eager and passionate desire to lead many to that righteousness. There rose before him the vision of what his mother-tongue might be in the hands of a master—the Italian, not of Rome, or Bologna, or Padua, or Verona, or even Florence, but a *lingua curialis*, musical and mellifluous, subtle and persuasive, "*illuminans et illuminatum*," ready to receive the coinage of new words from the mint of a mind like his own (*V. E.* 1. 17). With this view he trained himself in the mechanism of verse as no poet of any nation had ever trained himself before, adopted or invented the most fantastic combinations of rhythm and of rhyme, *Sestine*, *Ballate*, *Canzoni*, *Sonnets*, and became an expert in each. He tamed the rough and rushing words, which were "like a troop of wild horses that had never gone in harness before" (Grimm, *Mich. Ang.* 1. 17), till they were as a steed that knows its rider and obeys the slightest touch, till he could say with truth that "rhymes had

never made him say anything but what he meant to say, but that often he had made words say in his rhymes what they were not wont to express for other poets" (*Ott. Comm. H.* x 85). From that gymnastic school, from those acrobatic *tours de force*, the true athlete, the knight of song, went forth into the Tournament of Poesy, challenging the great masters of his own time and of the past (*H.* iv. 101, xxv. 94-99, perhaps *Purg.* xi. 99, xxiv. 55-60), conquering and to conquer.

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V

THE GREAT TRILOGY—(III B) THE SUFFERINGS OF  
THE EXILE

Dante had started from Rome, and was halting at Siena on his way to Florence, when the news of his sentence reached him, probably in April 1302. With that news there came the more welcome tidings that Charles of Valois had, under pressure from the Pope, at last left Florence. The Bianchi had a better chance of succeeding, as they had often done before, in turning the tables on the Neri by yet another revolution. The refugees joined Dante. The Siennese gave them, one imagines, but a cold reception. Dante speaks of them as vain, luxurious, ease-loving, in a tone of irritation and scorn (*H.* xxix. 121-139), which reminds one of the keen sarcasm of Deborah's invective against Reuben, or Dan, or Meroz (*Judg.* v. 16-23). Siena, however, like all other places that he visited, was made to contribute to the treasure-chambers of his great storehouse, and so we find him recording the story of La Pia (*Purg.* v. 133), of Provenzan Salvani (*Purg.* xi. 121), of Sapia, and Peter the Comb-maker (*Purg.* xiii. 109-127). The exiles met soon afterwards at Garganza, an Aretine castle, and determined to ally themselves (I think I trace in this the master-hand of the author of the *de Monarchia*) with the remnants of the old Ghibelline party that were scattered through the cities of Italy. There was a prospect of the new Ghibellinism, "*imperium et libertas*," as contrasted with the older feudalism, of equality, as contrasted with the class divisions of race and wealth, of which the poet had formed for himself so noble an ideal (*Conv.* iv.) I abandon the attempt to chronicle, week by week, the schemes, plots, debates of the company of exiles, and



content myself with giving the more prominent facts that connect themselves with the poet or his works. Of these I note first the fact that they found a leader in Alessandro of Romagna, of the old Ghibelline family of the Counts Guidi, a cousin of the man, bearing the same name, whom we find among the false coiners of *H* xxx. 77. In a letter of condolence (*Ep.* 11.) on his death, written to his nephews, *circa* 1308, Dante speaks of him in glowing terms. His banner (one notes the taste for the symbolism of heraldry which shows itself in *H* xvii. 55-74, xxvii. 40-45), a scourge *argent* on a field *gules*, was the fit emblem of his work as the scourge of the vices of his time. He had been a Prince Palatine of the Roman (Imperial) Court in Tuscany, he was now among the princes of the Great King in the Heavenly Jerusalem. From him the "*exul immeritus*" in his poverty and sorrow had received kindnesses never to be forgotten. Dante had been chosen as one of a Council of Twelve who acted as his assessors, and had thus been brought into close contact with him. Under his guidance they turned to Arezzo, an old Ghibelline city, where Uguccone della Faggiuola, afterwards one of Dante's heroes, to whom he dedicated, according to the Ilario letter, his *Inferno*, was in office as Podestà. For the present, however, he was halting between two opinions, expecting a cardinal's hat for his nephew, and the exiles finding but a cold reception there, sought Forlì as a refuge. That city was under Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi as a Papal vicar, and his action was significant of the altered policy of Boniface, of the widening rift between him and the French king, of which I have already spoken as probably the result of Dante's diplomacy. He placed himself, strange to say, at the head of the Bianchi exiles. Pistoia, Pisa, Bologna were ready to help them. By his advice they sent an embassy, of which Dante was one, to Bartolomeo della Scala, lord of Verona, who had succeeded his father Albert in 1301. To that mission to the "*gran Lombardo*" we may refer the gratitude to that illustrious house expressed in *Par.* xvii. 71, the hopes formed by the poet, with his singular insight into boy life and character, of the youngest brother of the house, then but twelve years old—Francesco, better known as the "Can Grande" of the Ghibelline hopes (note on *H* i. 101), his acquaintance with the local customs of Verona, its naked races (*H.* xv. 122) and wrestlings (*H.* xvi. 22), with the traditions of its abbey church (*Purg.* xviii.

118), with the scenery of Trent and the Valley of the Adige and the Lago di Garda (*H.* xii. 5, xx 61-78). A man of Dante's tastes and character was not likely to be at Verona without visiting the famous cities which lie within easy reach of it, and we may probably refer to this period his notices of Mantua (*H.* xx. 76-93), Padua (*H.* xv. 7), and Venice (*H.* xxi. 7). It was probably during this mission, and in Dante's absence, that the exiles suffered their first defeat, in March 1303. Under Ordelaifi they endeavoured to force an entrance into Florence. This failed, and many who were taken prisoners were beheaded. The party were reduced for a time to inaction. During that interval Dante heard of the outrages at Anagni and the death of Boniface VIII. (October 1303). The jealous giant had indeed avenged himself on his paramour (*Purg.* xxxii. 155). If Dante, on the one hand, in his pitiless and stern judgment, placed Boniface in Hell on account of his vindictiveness, his falsehood, the policy which had brought misery on Florence and on Italy, his profligate simony, the ultramontane sacerdotalism, which saw in the Empire only a subordinate power, with a derived and dependent authority. (*H.* xix. 53, 77), on the other, he hated the French king and his lawyer-agents, Nogaret and others, yet more, as caricaturing the true Ghibelline theory, and as conspicuous through his whole life for greed of gain, ruthless cruelty, and the abuse of the forms of law (*Purg.* xx. 49-93).

Benedict XI., who succeeded Boniface, a man of mild and genial character, tried to act the part of a mediator, and sent the Cardinal Niccolo da Prato to check the excesses of Corso Donati and his followers, to bring about the return of the exiles, and to set things straight generally. He came to Florence in 1304, and remained there for a few months; opened communication with the exiles, and received a letter from Dante (*Ep.* 1), as secretary to Alessandro da Romena, who had apparently resumed the position of their leader after the defeat of Ordelaifi. It is addressed to him in his character of pacificator, and is couched in words of profound respect. The hearts of the Bianchi had been filled with joy at his kind words. All that they desired was the peace and freedom of their city, the correction of abuses, their own restoration. They were ready, as devout sons of the Church, to sheath their swords and submit themselves to his arbitration. The

Cardinal's work seemed at first to prosper. On the 26th of April the citizens of Florence gathered in the Piazza of S. Maria Novella, with olive branches in their hands, and loud professions of fraternity (*Vill.* viii. 62-68, *D. C.* iii.)

Within a few days Florence was visited, as in the grim irony of history, by a terrible disaster, on which many (Dante perhaps included) must have looked as a judgment of God. On the 1st of May one of the strange grotesque performances in which mediæval taste delighted was exhibited on the Arno. The river was to represent Hell. Boats bearing naked demons and their victims, with pitchforks and burning torches, crowded the river. The Ponte Carraia, then a wooden structure, gave way. The crowds that stood on it fell into the river, and the counterfeit horrors passed into dread realities (*Vill.* viii. 70) \*

The hopes raised by the Cardinal's efforts were, however, delusive. His pacific intentions were thwarted, and he left Florence on June 4th, leaving the rebellious city under an interdict (*Vill.* viii. 70). There is a possible allusion to his mission in *H.* xxvi. 9. We shall meet with him again as playing a prominent part in a more important transaction, the election of Henry of Luxemburg as Emperor.

Matters were further embittered by a faction fight at Florence, which ended in a great fire, destroying 1700 houses, and involving many wealthy families in ruin. It was said to have been the act of an incendiary priest who belonged to the Neri. Thereupon Benedict summoned the leaders of that party, including Corso Donati, to Perugia to defend themselves. During their absence the exiles, nominally still under Alessandro, but on this occasion commanded by a Boschiera, made another rash attempt at a forcible entry (July 22), rushed into the Piazza of S. Mark with drawn swords and olive wreaths on their heads, and crying "Peace, peace!" Alas! there was no peace; and they were cut down, imprisoned, forced into cellars to hide themselves, utterly routed. The doom of banishment seemed as immutable as the decree of fate (*Vill.* viii. c. 72, *Neg.* pp. 177-9).

\* The suggestion that this display may have been the starting-point of Dante's *Hell* is sufficiently traversed by the facts (1) that he did not see it, and (2) that he had probably begun his poem before it. If I were to hazard any conjecture as to a connexion between the two, it would rather be that the Florentines, who knew something of his proposed work, tried to anticipate and outdo it.

From this point the life of the exile was that of a wanderer. Before we trace those wanderings, sometimes by the light of vague tradition only, sometimes by that of a dated document, it may be well to ask what had been the fortunes of his wife and children since he had left Florence in October 1301. The sentence of confiscation passed on him might seem to have involved them in absolute poverty. Of this, however, there is no evidence. When we come across traces of his sons, they meet us as having received a good education. Boccaccio's story (*V. D.*) of the discovery of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno* indicates that they still lived in the old home. It seems probable that Gemma, who was of the Donati family, had sufficient influence with her kinsman Corso to secure, under the plea of settlement or dowry, no inconsiderable portion of her husband's property. The poverty which he had to endure, "*quasi mendicando*" (*Conv.* 1. 3), from city to city and court to court, the "eating of others' bread," the "going up and down others' stairs" (*Par.* xvii. 58-60), fell on him, but not on her.

Of the probable resting-places for the exile's weary feet we note—

(1) The castle of Alessandro da Romena in the Casentino. The letter already quoted recognises his goodness and munificence. It was natural that the secretary should join his lord. The references to the Casentino district, the upper valley of the Arno, in *H.* xxx. 65, *Purg.* v. 94, xiv. 43, fall in with this hypothesis.

(2) Villani (*V. D.*) reports a visit to Bologna, partly to continue his own studies, partly to superintend those of his son Pietro. The evidence is not strong, but is hardly to be rejected on the ground that the boy was not more than fourteen years old. That, as has been shown above (p. xli), was a common age enough for university students. In any case, however, the studies must have been interrupted in the spring of 1306, when the Bolognese, having expelled the Bianchi (Dante and his son, if they were there, must have been among those so treated), were placed by the Pope's legate (Napoleon Orsini, who will meet us further on, at Avignon), who took the part of the exiles, under an interdict which closed the schools and excommunicated every professor or student who continued to teach or learn there (*Vill.* viii. 85).

(3.) A visit to Padua stands on firmer ground, Dante's name

occurring as a witness to an agreement dated August 27, 1306. He is described as then living in the parish of S Lorenzo. A house known as the Casa Carrarese in that quarter is shown with the inscription—not without an element of comfort for us—

*"Fazsoni e vendette  
Qui trassero Dante 1306  
Das Carrara, da Giotto  
Ebbe men duro esilio"*

His visit to this city was probably connected with the fact that Giotto was then painting the frescoes of the Arena Chapel of the Scrovigni which was built by Enrico of that house, who had joined the brotherhood of the Frati Gaudenti (*H.* xxiii. 103), by way of expiation for his father's avarice (*H.* xvii. 64). Ruskin (*Giotto and his Works*) draws a pleasant picture (embodied in the chromo-lithograph from Mrs. Higford Burr's drawing, published by the Arundel Society) of the artist and his wife in the chapel, "Dante, with abstracted eye, alternately conversing with his friend and watching the gambols of the children playing on the grass before the door" (See also *Lindsay*, ii. 14-26.) One notes, as presenting points of contact in the subjects of the frescoes, the three Theological and four Ethical virtues (*Purg.* i. 23, xxxi. 103-111), the Marriage at Cana (*Purg.* xiii. 29), the treachery of Judas (*H.* xxxiv. 62), Inconstancy whirling round upon the Wheel of Fortune (*H.* vii. 96)—(*Lindsay*, *ibid.*) We may think further of the traveller as he observed the embankments which defended Padua from the inundations of the Brenta, and compared them with those which he had seen in his earlier travels between Bruges and Wissant (*H.* xv. 1-9). Within two months of the Paduan document we have another in which Dante appears as taking a more important part, and which shows him to have been then in the Lunigiana region of Northern Tuscauy. His journey would probably have led him through Mantua, with all its memories of Virgil and Sordello, and Parma, which had remained faithful to the Ghibelline cause. Of all the noble families of Italy, there were none whose claims to true nobility Dante would have admitted so readily, even on his own principle of *virtus sola nobilitas*, as those of the Malaspini of that region (*Canz.* xvi.; *Purg.* viii. 118). He dwells

on their wide-spread reputation, on the glory which they had gained by the sword, and yet more by the right use of their wealth. He fixes the date to which we have now come as that of his experience of their goodness (*Purg* viii. 134). One of the family appears in the agreement as a brother (*qu. Tertiary*) of the Franciscan Order. Yes, there the document lies before me, as printed in *Frat V. D.* p. 197, in all the amplitude of the old law Latin, once so full of life to all connected with it. It is in form a treaty of peace between Francis, Marquis of Malaspina, and his brothers Moroello and Conradin, acting by their procurator, *Dante Alagerius*, of the one part, and the Bishop of Luni on the other, intended to bring to an end a long series of grievances and encroachments on either side. The fact that Dante was chosen for this office implies that the Malaspini had some previous knowledge of him. The reputation which he had gained by his diplomacy in the treaty between the Commune of Florence and that of San Gimignano may have pointed him out as an expert who could be trusted in the complicated difficulties of a transaction of this nature. For the most part the terms of the agreement are such as might have been drafted by any lawyer in any century; but the preamble has, if I mistake not, one sentence pre-eminently Dantesque. It recites the long-standing quarrel between the two parties, but now "the Bishop and the Marquises are following the example of the Lord's words to His Apostles (there is a dogmatic meaning, I fancy, in the "*exemplo summi Patris*," reminding us, as it does, of the "*summo Giove crocifisso*" of *Purg* vi. 118), *Pacem meam do vobis, pacem meam relinquo vobis*; and then, in words which read like a *replica* of the thoughts, hopes, dreams, of an ideal polity embodied in the *Monarchia* —

"Taking into account, further, that tranquillity ought to be an object of desire to every kingdom, seeing that by her nations grow to completeness, and all useful arts are maintained, and that she, as the mother of all good acts, repairs the losses of the human race by a restorative succession, increases all the faculties of life, raises manners to a higher culture, whose virtues scarce can worthily be acknowledged, the Lords and the Bishop aforesaid, glorying in the leisurely tranquillity and the calm and peaceful amenities of life in their subjects and followers, and guided by the grace of our Most High Lord and Saviour, do hereby enter into the aforesaid peace for true and perpetual concord."

Something one can trace of a delicate courtesy in the action of the Malaspini in this matter for which Dante, we can well imagine, would feel grateful. They would not offer him the eleemosynary hospitality, the crumbs from the rich man's table, the place "below the salt," which he was destined so often to find in the houses of the rich and noble. He was to come as an official guest, employed in important functions, placed on an equal footing with great personages. I seem to see the grave, proud, reserved, yet courteous Florentine solemnly rising to embrace the Bishop of Luni in his robes, and give him the kiss of peace (*invicem osculantes*) by which the treaty was, as it were, signed and sealed. The Malaspini had, moreover, the hereditary reputation of being patrons of literature. They had been conspicuous as welcoming the Troubadours of Provence at their castle in the latter part of the twelfth century (*Weg* p. 37, *Faur* i p. 257), and the Moroello, whose name has met us in the treaty, had inherited their tastes. In Boccaccio's story of the discovery of the first seven cantos of the *Inferno*, as well as of many sonnets and *canzoni*, in a closet or chest in Dante's house (a story which he says he had from Andrea Poggi, Dante's nephew), he relates that they were first shown to Dino Frescobaldi, probably one of the banking firm of that name (the name appears in the register of Bishop Drokensford, already quoted), as being himself a poet, and that, as he judged highly of their merit, they were sent, not to Dante himself, but to the Marquis Moroello, with whom he was then staying. He was delighted with them, and gave them to the poet, who made answer—one wishes one could think we have the *ipsissima verba*, and not Boccaccio's *rechauffé* or invention. "I truly thought that these, with many other writings of mine, had been destroyed when my house was plundered, and therefore I had dismissed them from my thoughts. But since it has pleased God that they should not be destroyed, and He has brought them back to me, I will take steps to continue the work according to my first intention." Boccaccio adds that the "*segustando*" of *H. viii. 1* is the indication of this fresh start. With a Herodotean candour which seems to me at once to diminish the actual evidence and to increase the verisimilitude of the narrative, he adds that he heard exactly the same story from Dino Perini, a Florentine friend of Dante's, who meets us again as the "*Melibœus*" of the Virgilian eclogues at the close of the poet's

life, with the notable exception that he repudiated Andrea Poggi's claim to have been the discoverer of the MSS., and claimed that honour for himself (*V. D.*)

True to his habit of gathering wherever he went all local and family traditions which might be worked into his great poem, Dante would seem, during his stay with Moroello, to have sought out those of the Lunigiana, and we find him dwelling on the cavern of the magician Aruns in the marble hills of Carrara (*II. xx. 47*), the past glories, now decayed, of the town of Luni (*Par. xvi. 73*, *Vill. i. 50*), probably also the story of Hadrian V., whose niece Alagia (scarcely "grandchild," as in *Longf.*) was married to Moroello Malaapina (*Purg. xix. 100-145*)

To these memories of the country we may add the magnificent testimony which he bears to the character of his patron in *Purg.* viii. 118-138, and the fact that the latter, though the family had been Guelphs, was appointed Imperial Vicar of Brescia by Henry VII. after its conquest. There is a fairly general agreement that Dante dedicated the *Purgatorio* to his patron, and a letter is extant from the poet to his friend (*Ep. 3*) (not dated, and probably written in 1310-11), in which he dwells on the *amor terribilis et imperiosus* which possessed him for some unknown fair one in the Arno valley (see p. lix)

To this period we may also refer, if we accept it as historical, the memorable letter that bears the name of Frate Ilario. That letter has been the subject of much discussion, and experts now, for the most part, reject it as apocryphal. I am not prepared, though there are authorities (*e.g.*, Bianchi, Fraticelli, *V. D. c. 12*) on the other side, to dispute that judgment, but the letter has, at least, so dramatic a truthfulness, that it must, I conceive, have come from some one who had a vivid impression resting on a knowledge which, if not directly, was indirectly personal. If not genuine, the letter is a work of genius. As such, it seems worth while to give it *in extenso*.

"To his most worthy and noble Lord, Uguccone della Faggiuola, pre-eminent among the nobles of Italy, Brother Hilarius, a humble monk of the *Corvo*, in the gorge of the Magra, sendeth greeting (*salutem*) in Him who is the true salvation (*salus*) \*

"As the Saviour speaks to us in the Gospel, 'a good man out of the

\* Note the play on the two meanings, as in Dante, *V. N. iii. 10*, *B. 2, Cans. 2*



good treasure of his heart bringeth forth a good thing,' wherein are two things implied, *sc* that by those things that are without we may know, in the case of others, the things that are within, and that by the words which we utter to that purpose we, in our turn, may manifest what is within us. For, as it is written, 'By their fruits ye shall know them,' and though this He said of sinners, yet much more universally may we understand it of the righteous, since these always accept the opportunity of disclosing themselves, as those do of concealing. Nor is it only the desire of glory that persuades us to let the good things which we have within manifest themselves; the command of God itself deters us from leaving what has been granted to us by His grace, to remain idle. For God and Nature alike condemn the idle and unprofitable, wherefore that tree which brings forth no fruit in its season is doomed to the fire.

"Truly, therefore, that man whose work, with an exposition of my own, I send to its destination, seems to me, among all other Italians, from his boyhood upward to have unlocked and brought forth the treasure that was within. Wonderful to tell, as I have heard from others, even in earliest youth he essayed to speak things unheard before, and more wondrous yet, endeavoured to set forth in our vulgar tongue the things which by men of highest genius can scarcely be expounded in Latin; our vulgar tongue I say, and that not in simple prose, but in melodious verse. And leaving his true praises to be found in his works, where doubtless they shine forth more brightly in the judgment of the wise, I will come briefly to my purpose.

"Behold, therefore, when this man was planning a journey to the regions north of the Alps, and was passing through the diocese of Luni, impelled either by his reverence for the place or by some other motive, he came to the above-named monastery. And when I saw him, as yet unknown to myself and to my brothers, I asked him what he wanted; and when he answered not a word, but went on looking at the buildings," [a singularly individualising touch this!] "I asked him again what he wanted. Then he, looking round on me and my brothers, answered 'Pence.' Thereupon I more and more desired to know from him what manner of man he was, and I drew him apart from the others, and after some conversation learnt who he was. Though before that day I had never seen him, yet his fame\* had reached me long before this. And after he saw that I was altogether wrapt up in him, and learnt my affection for his works, he with a manner of frank courtesy took out a manuscript from his bosom and kindly placed it in my hands. 'Behold,' said he, 'a part of my work, which, it may be, you have not seen. Such a monument I leave with you that you keep your memory of me fresh.' And when he had shown me the manuscript, I gratefully clasped it to my bosom, and in his presence I opened it, and fixed my eyes on it attentively. And when I saw words written in our vulgar tongue, and

\* Fame resting, as in the *poeta Fiorentino* of the Apothecaries' Company, chiefly on the *Minor Poems*—possibly also on Latin poems no longer extant.

my looks showed some surprise, he asked the cause of my hesitation ; and I answered that I was surprised at the kind of language that he had chosen, both because it seemed difficult, almost inconceivable, that so arduous a scheme could be rightly embodied in our vulgar tongue, and because the combination of so much knowledge with the poor garb of our common speech seemed incongruous. And then he made answer, ' Truly with reason dost thou think thus, and at the outset, when the seed sown, perchance from Heaven, was beginning to grow towards a purpose of this nature, I chose a form for it more according to our rules of art, nor did I only choose it, but, writing verses after my usual manner, I began—

*'Ultima regna canam, fludo contermina mundo  
Spiritus qua lata patent, quæ proemina solvunt  
Pro meritis cuscunque suis' \**

But when I looked at the state of the time we live in, I saw that the verses of illustrious poets were counted as a thing of nought, and that for this cause men of noble birth, by whom in better times such things were wont to be written, now leave the liberal arts (alas !) to men of the lower orders. On this account I laid aside the lyre on which I had relied, and prepared another more suitable for the taste of the men of our time, for it is in vain to offer solid food to the mouths of sucklings. And when he had said this, he added, with much earnestness, that, if I had leisure for such things, his wish was that I should enrich the work with some explanatory notes, and afterwards transmit it to you accompanied by them. This indeed, though I have not fully worked out all that lies hidden in his words, I have laboured at faithfully and with hearty good-will, and, in accordance with his request, who professed himself your devoted friend, I now send the work thus annotated, in which, if there shall appear anything ambiguous, you must impute it wholly to my own incapacity, since without doubt the text ought to be accounted as altogether perfect.

"It, however, your Excellency should inquire about the other two parts of this work, as with the intention of completing it by their addition, you may seek the second part, following this in order, from the most noble lord the Marquis Morosello, and the third will be found in the hands of the illustrious Frederick, king of Sicily.† For, as the

\* " The kingdom, of the far-off world shall be  
The subject of my song, continuous  
With the world's ocean-waters, realms which he  
Oped wide to souls of men, and there to each,  
According to his merits, due reward  
Or punishment assign "

† As a matter of fact, the *Paradiso* was dedicated to Can Grande of Verona. The references to Frederick in *Purg* vii 19, *Par* xix 135, xx 63, *Conv* iv 6, show a tone of bitterness which perhaps grew out of disappointment, and disappointment implies previous hope. Frederick had promised support to Henry VII while living, and drew back from the Ghibelline cause after his death (*l. cit.* ix 54).

author assured me, after he had looked round on all Italy, he had chosen you three above all others to whom to offer this tripartite work."

In connexion with this document one or two facts may be noted. (1) The monastery of Santa Croce del Corvo, close to the mouth of the Magra river, was of the Benedictine Order, (2) another monastery of the same Order was found at Trivio, situated in the territory of the Fagguola family. The monks of the latter were in friendly correspondence with that family, and among the members of the Chapter at the time indicated by the Italian letter there was a brother of Uguccone, then a member of the Chapter. A combination of these facts suggests a hypothesis which is at least plausible. Dante had made up his mind to leave Italy for France. He wished to leave the *Inferno*, then completed, with Uguccone, but could not present it in person. He chose a Benedictine monk of Santa Croce del Corvo, as likely to be able to convey it safely to the monastery of the same Order at Trivio, and so to Uguccone himself. He found in Ilario, the first monk to whom he addressed himself, a sympathising admirer, and so entered into the conversation which the letter reports (*Frat V. D.* c. 12).

The fact of a journey to Paris after Dante's exile rests on the authority of Villani (ix. 136), who was personally acquainted with him—Boccaccio writing vaguely, and Giovanni da Serravalle speaking definitely, of his studying there and at Oxford before he entered on his public life at Florence. I have already said that I see nothing improbable in the statement of the earlier visit. Still less, it seems to me, is there any improbability in the journey which this hypothesis assumes. A sufficient motive, though, it may be, not the only one, would be found in the desire to enlarge his knowledge of physical science and of dogmatic theology, as a preparation for the completion of his *magnum opus*, and in the fact that Paris was pre-eminent among all the universities of Europe in both subjects. There the echoes of Aquinas and Roger Bacon's friend, Peter de Maharncuria (Maricourt), were still heard in the lecture-rooms (R. B. *Op. Tert.* 12, 13, 20). Of the Italian universities, Bologna was celebrated chiefly for its lectures on Aristotle and civil law, and therefore would have no special attractions for him; and even if it had, its schools had, as we have seen, been closed in 1306. The

expenses of a journey for such a purpose might well be defrayed by the munificence of a patron like Moroello.

It falls in with this theory that there are comparatively few notices of Dante's life at this period. The date of the treaty of Luni is October 1306. It seems probable that he gave up all participation in the action of the Ghibelline Bianchi, who were still struggling, now at Arezzo, now at Forlì, now led by the Cardinal Orsini, and now by Ordelaffi, and was content more than ever to be "a party by himself" (*Par.* xvii. 69), and that he spent several months at Mulazzo in the Lunigiana, where a tower and a house still bear his name, perhaps also at Fordinovo, the palace-castle of the Malaspini, under the protection of Moroello. Probably the letter written to him from the Casentino valley may belong to this period, and there are traces of his having acted as secretary to Ordelaffi at Forlì during part of 1308 (*Frat. V. D.* p. 174). The visit to the Monastery del Corvo, according to this combination, the conjectural character of which I fully admit, falls in the spring of 1309.

The itinerary of the journey to Paris, which I have already traced, may belong of course to an earlier or a later journey. But there are traces in the *Purgatory* and *Paradise* which, if I mistake not, belong especially to the latter. The receding shores and the sound of the vesper-bell floating over the waters suggest a voyage from Luni to Genoa (*Purg.* viii. 1-6), as the Lerici and Turbia cornices (*Purg.* iii. 49) do the road from Genoa to Nice and Marseilles. The bitterness with which he speaks of the base and avaricious Gascon who then, as Clement V., occupied the Papal chair at Avignon (*Par.* xvii. 82, xxx. 143), and of the bishops and cardinals who surrounded him, implies the personal antipathy of one who could speak, as Petrarch spoke, from personal knowledge of the abominations of that Babylonian captivity. He would hear at Paris or elsewhere of the ferocity with which Philip the Fair had hunted to death the great Order of the Knights-Templars (*Purg.* xx. 93); how he had enriched his treasury by debasing the coin of his kingdom (*Par.* xix. 120), how he had bound the Pope, in return for the pressure which decided the election in his favour, by the articles of a secret treaty which pledged him either to abandon the sacred city, which was the centre of Christendom, to its widowed life, bereaved alike of its

spiritual and imperial rulers—that must have seemed a death-blow to the ideal of the writer of the *de Monarchia*—or to acquiesce in the suppression of the Templars, and to brand the name of Boniface with infamy (*Vill.* viii. 80). If, as I surmise, one object of the journey to Paris was to acquire a more thorough knowledge of the astronomic science and dogmatic theology which were to be expounded in the *Paradiso*, we may think of him as sitting at the feet of some Sorbonne professor as he lectured on Aquinas, or some “master of those who know” in the region of natural science, as he unfolded, with astrolabe and globes before him, the latest discoveries or speculations of Roger Bacon and his friend Pierre de Maricourt on the dark spots on the moon’s surface (*Par.* 11), the errors that were creeping into the calendar through men’s ignorance of astronomy (*Par.* xxvi. 142), the imagined aspect which the whole planetary system would present to one who looked at it from the sphere of the fixed stars (*Par.* xxii. 133–154). As far as I can judge, the astronomical knowledge of the *Paradiso* is of a higher, more speculative character than that of the *Inferno*.

The studies at Paris, however, whatever may have been their nature, were interrupted by an event which excited his hopes as nothing else had done, and called him back to Italy. On the death of Albert of Hapsburg, who, like his father Rodolph, had never entered Italy (*Purg.* vi. 97), there was the usual excitement and intrigue among those who aspired to the imperial dignity. Philip the Fair made desperate efforts to secure it for his brother, the Charles of Valois whose interference in the affairs of Florence had been so fatal to Dante’s fortunes. He was thwarted by the secret diplomacy of the Avignon court. The Cardinal Niccolò Albertini da Prato (the self-same man, it will be remembered, who had been sent by Benedict XI as a pacificator, and had excommunicated Corso Donati and his adherents) persuaded Clement that there must be some limit to the all-grasping ambition of the French king, that it would not do to let Italy become a mere appanage of his dynasty, and so, by his diplomacy, the choice of the electors fell, to the surprise of Europe, on Henry, Count of Luxemburg. He was chosen on the 25th of November 1308, crowned as emperor of Germany in 1309. He remained for two years in Germany, but it became known in 1310 that he was about to proceed to Italy, and Dante, full of the hopes of the idealist,

and eager to take his part in the regeneration of his country, not without some expectation that it would lead to his own triumphant return to Florence, hastened back to take his part in bringing the great work, in which he had already, I conceive, had some share, to its completion.

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## VI.

## THE GREAT TRILOGY—(III c) THE DREAM AND THE AWAKENING.

I submit to the judgment of the reader the evidence which seems to me to justify the statement I have just made as at least a probable hypothesis. If, after all, the conclusion to which I have been led on the strength of undesigned coincidences, and of the fact that it combines and explains events which are otherwise isolated and difficult of explanation, requires to be accepted as with a note of interrogation, I claim the benefit of the Baconian axiom, *Prudens interrogatio dimidium scientiæ*. To me it seems to throw light not only on Dante's life and character, but on those of one of the most remarkable and most ill-starred in the long line of German emperors, to clear up the relations between the idealist monarch, born either too early or too late, and the idealist poet, who had no resting-place amid the troubles of his time, but who was the representative at once of the traditions of a noble past and of the aspirations of a nobler future.

The story of Henry VII.'s election, with all the bye-play of intrigues behind the scene which led to it, may be told, in the first instance, from the German point of view (*Menzel*, v 106-136). Philip the Fair, as has just been said, had been plotting before the death of Albert to secure the election of his brother, Charles of Valois. He thought that he had secured the Pope's support by the secret treaty, and extorted from him a letter to the Archbishop of Cologne as one of the electors, recommending Charles. By embassies of his own, by gifts of money and promises, he secured both the Archbishop's vote and that of Duke John of Sachsen-Lauenburg. Other German princes, however, were strongly opposed to the aggrandisement of the French dynasty, and looked out for a competitor who would commend himself to the electors. They

fixed on Henry, Count of Luxemburg, then in his fortieth year. His territory was not large, his family had played no conspicuous part in history, but the man himself seemed worthy of all honour. He had showed himself, as the Bayard of Germany, *sans peur et sans reproche*, had fought with all knightly skill and prowess at many tournaments. His character stood high for truth and righteousness. He was the friend of the poor and the oppressed, and within his domain put down with a strong hand the robber barons, who used to sally forth from their castles and plunder merchants and other travellers. It became a proverb that the highways of Luxemburg were as safe as churches elsewhere. It was in his favour, of course, that his brother Baldwin was Archbishop of Treves. The Archbishop of Mayence served as a connecting link to secure the Pope's approval. That prelate had risen to his high dignity by his skill as a physician, at first in the court of Henry, afterwards in that of other princes, finally in that of Clement V, who nominated him to the Archbishopric on the ground that so skilful a healer of the bodies of men must also be a good physician of their souls. He secured the Pope's approval, threw his weight into Henry's scale, and the result was that he was unanimously elected (he had said that he would not accept the imperial crown if the election were not unanimous) on November 27, 1308. The plans of Philip the Fair were finally checkmated as far as the Empire was concerned.

From the Italian point of view (*Vill* viii. 101) we have a different story. Philip pressed the claim of his brother on Clement V. as the sixth, the secret article, to which he had pledged himself in blank. Philip and Charles himself were to appear at Avignon, backed by their knights and barons, and the Pope, they thought, would not dare to resist openly. Their plans, however, got wind, and the Pope was alarmed and took secret counsel with the Cardinal da Prato. He advised the Pope to anticipate Philip's formal request by pushing on the election of another emperor. The Pope asked, naturally, who was to be elected. The Cardinal was ready with his answer. The Count of Luxemburg was the best man in all Germany, loyal, open, Catholic, faithful, and obedient to the Church, "*uomo di venire a grandissima cosa*." The Pope shrank from the publicity of a Bull as certain to rouse opposition. The Cardinal suggested the use of a private seal,

probably the seal of the Fisherman, which since (perhaps before) the time of Clement IV. had been used by Popes, instead of the official seal which attested a Papal Bull, for their less formal communications (*D. C. A.* art. "*Ring*"). The letters were sent to the electors, and Henry was chosen accordingly.

The whole subsequent history of the Emperor shows that the Cardinal da Prato was resolved to carry out, through thick and thin, the policy on which he had thus entered. He was appointed as legate in Italy to receive the Emperor on his arrival (*Vill.* viii. 102). In 1311 he was sent in the same character to represent the Pope in the Church of St. John Lateran (*Vill.* ix. 22) at the Emperor's coronation, and officiated in that character on August 1, 1312 (*Vill.* ix. 43). This department of the foreign affairs of the Papal Court was committed to his special care. He gave himself heart and soul to the task of reconciling the claims of the Empire and the Church, and acted as the protector of the new and reformed Ghibellinism. What was it, we ask, that led the Cardinal da Prato to adopt this line of action? What do we know of his previous history? To answer those questions we must retrace our steps a little. It will be remembered that he had been sent by Benedict XI. to Florence in March 1303. Villani (viii. 69) describes him on this his first appearance in the Dante drama as a Dominican friar, skilled in Scripture, subtle and sagacious, cautious and diplomatic (*grande pratico*), and of a Ghibelline family. He preached a sermon in the Piazza of St. John, urging measures of peace with Dante and the other exiles, and restored some elements of the constitution of the "*popolo vecchio*" which the Donati faction had set aside. They had recourse to the stratagem of forging a letter in his name to the exiled Bianchi, inviting them to attack Florence, which led to their making inroads as far as Trespiano and Mugello. This roused popular feeling against him, and he went to Prato. The Neri dogged his steps and spread their calumnies. He was met with murmurs and resistance. He left Prato under an interdict, returned to Florence, and finally, on his departure from that city, June 4, 1304, launched his anathemas against its inhabitants, leaving them, since they chose cursing rather than blessing, under the curse of God and of His Church. No sooner had he returned to Benedict at Perugia than the Pope, by his advice, summoned Corso Donati and eleven other leaders



of the Neri (*Vill.* viii. 72) to give an account of their deeds and answer the Cardinal's charges against them. The latter took advantage of their absence to write to the heads of the Ghibelline party among the exiles, at Bologna, Arezzo, Pisa, and Pistoia, urging them to force an entrance into Florence and expel the Neri. They acted on his counsel, and but for the delay caused by the non-arrival of the troops from Pistoia, led by one of the Uberti, would have succeeded. As it was, they advanced on July 20 into the Borgo of San Gallo, and the Aretines carried off the bars of a wooden gate as a trophy. The Guelph citizens, however, rallied (Villani was one of them) in the Piazza of St John, and the attempt was frustrated. Within a week of the attempt Benedict died, it was reported by poison, at Perugia. Ten months passed before the cardinals could agree as to a successor. At last the Cardinal da Prato suggested Bertrand de Gotto, Archbishop of Bordeaux, as a Pope who would, on the one hand, be acceptable to the king of France, and, on the other, be pliant in their hands and favour the Ghibelline cause. Philip the Fair gave his consent readily, but, to secure his own interests, had a private interview with the Archbishop, and extorted from him five definite promises: his own reconciliation to the Church, and that of his followers; the condemnation of Boniface; a grant of all tithes in France for ten years, the restoration of two of the Colonna family and others to the rank of cardinal. The sixth promise was, as we have seen, as a blank cheque. The Archbishop was to bind himself to meet the king's wishes whenever he thought fit to disclose them, and he did so.

All this shows that the Cardinal da Prato was playing the part of a diplomatist with all the subtlety of an Italian nature; that he was in close communication with the Ghibelline exiles, that his whole policy was framed in accordance with their interests. We ask, whose was the leading mind among those exiles? with whom was the Cardinal most likely to be in close communication? The answer scarcely admits of a doubt. Dante was there, with an established fame, as we have seen, for diplomatic negotiations. He may have known him as Bishop of Ostia in the Jubilee year at Rome. If Prato was his birthplace, that would be another point of contact with the Florentine poet. He had already addressed a letter to the Cardinal (*Ep.* 1), and that letter, undated, but probably

in May 1304, implied several others (*vestrarum literarum series*). He had vindicated his own attitude and that of his colleagues as that of a purified Ghibellinism, seeking peace and freedom. He had professed his readiness to accept the Cardinal's mediation and to follow his directions, in a confidential communication through the friar who was the bearer of the letter, and in the letter itself. The conjecture which I venture to interpolate at this point is, that the correspondence did not end here; that Dante and the Cardinal continued to act together, that it was the former who directed his attention to Henry of Luxemburg as a candidate for the Empire, that he placed in his hands, as a full statement of the principles on which he was acting, the MS. of the *De Monarchia*. This is, I readily allow, only a conjecture. I submit that it is probable enough in itself, and that it explains the chief incidents that follow—probable in itself—for whenever Dante visited Cologne (*H* xxiii 63), whether from Paris or from Arles (*H*. ix 112), his natural route would take him by way of Luxemburg and Treves, and so down the Moselle\*. His reputation as a scholar and a poet, still more perhaps as a skilled physician, would commend him to the notice of the medico-ecclesiastic who afterwards became Archbishop of Mayence. He would, at least, hear of the good government of Henry's territory, and of his fame as a pattern of all knightly excellence. He may have seen him or heard of his character, and been impressed by the promise which he then gave of future excellence. The poet's capacity for admiration led him to idealise him, as he had previously idealised Charles Martel (*Par.* viii 49-57). I find in Dante, on this hypothesis, the master-mind that was working behind the scenes and pulling the wires that moved the puppets in the great drama which was now unfolding. It was natural, almost inevitable, that it should be so. An exile is, by the necessity of the case, almost always a conspirator. He schemes for his own return to his fatherland and for the triumph of his party. The aristocrats and democrats of Greek and Italian republics, Protestants and Catholics in the struggles of the Reformation, Royalists in Holland during the Commonwealth, Republicans in the same country under the Stuarts, Jacobites, Non-Jurors, *Emigrés*, Italian

\* The reference to the beaver in *H* xvii 21 indicates either the Moselle or the Rhine. There is no indication that Dante travelled to the Elbe, the Danube, or the Wever, the other habitats of that animal (Cuvier, *Règne Anim.*), and it was not indigenous in Italy or France.

and Spanish refugees from Bourbon tyranny—all these take their places in the great induction. And in proportion to his brain-power, the exile is tempted to think that he can move the springs of the world's history, impel statesmen to work out his plans, counter-mine the schemes of kings. To follow the underground workings of a man like Kossuth or Mazzini in the nineteenth century is to gain some insight into the action and character of Dante in the fourteenth.

The plot opened well. Henry was, as we have seen, elected on November 7, 1308. The news came to Italy. On any supposition, Dante must have heard of it with the most intense eagerness. On the provisional working hypothesis which I have stated, he felt called on to complete the work he had begun. The old feeling doubtless came over him, "If I go, who is to remain? if I remain, who is there to go?" but he decided to go, as he had decided when he went to encounter Boniface at Rome. It was his part, he deemed, to be the guiding prophet of the new empire, which for him was also the new theocracy (*Epp* 5, 6, *Mon passim*).

And so we come to the journey of 1309 indicated in the Ilarian letter, made ostensibly, perhaps, for the purpose of visiting the University of Paris, as he had done before, but really to watch the movements of the French king and his brother, on whom he looked as the incarnation of all evil, and whom he desired, as far as lay in his power, to thwart, and to take such action as might seem desirable. So far, when Dante crossed the Alps, all was going on well. Henry had been crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. His election had been recognised by the Pope. Two legates, the Cardinal da Prato, as we have seen, being one, were named to prepare for his reception in Italy. At or about this time, I find reason to believe, he had a personal interview with Henry, of which he has himself given an account. I fix the date of that interview as prior to the arrival of the representatives of the Ghibelline exiles at Lausanne, when Henry was about to start on his great expedition (*Vill* ix 7), for two reasons (1) that the tone in which Dante writes to him (*Epp* 7) is that of one who had a right to speak to him as Samuel spoke to Saul when he spared Agag and the Amalekites, who had, that is, bidden him to enter on his work as a divine mission, (2) that the language which he uses in the same letter as to Henry's son, Prince John of Bohemia, as the "young Ascanius" who was to carry on

his father's work, implies, in a man like Dante, a personal knowledge, and that prince did not join his father in the Italian expedition. Where the meeting took place I cannot say—probably at Constance, where Henry held his court in 1309 (*Menzel*, v. 109). He tells us that at that meeting—the most memorable in his life since he stood face to face with Boniface VIII.—he was profoundly impressed with the Emperor's clemency and benignity; that his spirit had rejoiced within him; that he said within himself, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world!"\* Of that new Messiah he was himself to be, as a second Baptist, the herald and the forerunner. He had foiled Philip on his own ground, had found a shelter even in the wood (Avignon or France?) to which the giant had dragged the harlot, with whom he was wroth because she had looked on Dante with a glance of favour (*Purg xxxii. 159*)

All this, of course, meant that he had found in Henry one who accepted *en bloc* his views on the theory of the Empire, as set forth in the *De Monarchia*. The hour and the man had at last come, and the dream was within a measurable distance of becoming a reality. One who reads the treatise in its connexion with Dante's life will see that it was much more than an abstract speculation. Like Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*, which begins, as it does, with speculations on the ground of all knowledge, the foundation of all ethics, and the nature of all government, it was distinctly a "Tract for the Times," as much a political manifesto as Mr Gladstone's volume on the *Relations of Church and State*, or Burke's *Thoughts on the French Revolution*. And the book itself presents so many coincidences of thought with the closing Cantos of the *Purgatory*, that, though it may have been begun before, it must have been completed at the same time. There is the same allusion to Constantine's donation (*Purg xxxii 125, Mon iii 10*), the same imagery of the Earthly Paradise (*Purg xxviii, Mon. iii 15*), the same assertion that the authority of the Emperor is co-ordinate with that of the Pope, not dependent on it (*Purg xvi 107, Mon iii. 1*). The stress laid on the thought that God alone elects and confirms the Emperor, the so-called electors being but the inter-

\* The words, thus applied, sound to us as almost on the verge of blasphemy, but we must remember that they had been used before by the envoys from Palermo who were sent to Pope Martin IV to implore his forgiveness after the Sicilian Vespers (*Malasp. c. 225*)

preters of His providence (*Mon* iii 15), is obviously connected with Henry's election. The somewhat hurried admission "that in some things the Emperor may be subject to the Pope, that the attitude of the Emperor to the Pope was that of a first-born son to his father" (*Mon* iii. 15), reads like an after-thought, inserted, it may be, to disarm Clement V's suspicions, or soothe the orthodox sensitiveness of the Cardinal da Prato. Even the apparently purely physical speculation as to the cause of the moon's spots in *Par* ii. has a bearing on the great controversy. The Pope's partisans urged that the two "great lights" of *Gen* i 16 were symbols of the Church and the State. The moon, they urged, borrows its light from the sun, so does the State its authority from the Church. "No," is Dante's reply, "I admit the analogy—I deny the fact." The moon shines (so Roger Bacon may have taught him) by its own inherent luminosity (*Par*. ii 147 n). As it was, all Henry's words and acts from the date of this assumed interview were in strict accordance with the teaching of the thinker, who was, on this hypothesis, his master. The first of those acts is not directly connected with Dante's life or with Italian history, but it has too deep an interest for all who sympathise with men's struggles for freedom to be passed over. It was at Constance in 1309 that Henry formally recognised the comparative independence of the three Swiss cantons, Uri, Schwyz, and Unterwalden, as holding immediately from the Emperor, and so released them, as far as his action went, from the tyranny of the house of Hapsburg, against which they had risen under Melchthal, Stauffacher, and Furst. Such an act was, it need hardly be said, an example of the

*"Parcere subjectis et debellare superbos,"*

of Dante's great instructor (*Æn* vi 854), which he quotes in *Mon*. ii 7 as part of his ideal of a righteous ruler. The story of William Tell, which connects itself with that revolt, may be historical or legendary. It will be welcome, I think, to many students of Dante to learn that they may legitimately connect his name with the struggle for freedom of which it has become the symbol. If Dante, as I conjecture, was at Constance, he may have met there the three great patriot heroes of Switzerland.

The intentions which Henry announced on starting for his Italian expedition are couched in the same tone. He speaks as though

Dante were at his side prompting him. He came to restore peace to a country that was torn by factions and wars. When he looked on the plains of Italy, he fell on his knees and gave God thanks that he was nearing the fulfilment of his task (*Menzel*, v 119). He was received as an angel of God at Asti and Susa (*D C* iii. 303). When he entered Milan on December 26, 1311, he made a solemn declaration that he came to win the blessing of the peace-makers, to restore the exiles of both parties, to reconcile the long-standing quarrels of the Guelphs and Ghibellines (*D. C. ibid*) He would not act as belonging to either party, but would be the impartial friend of both. We seem to hear an echo of the Dantean language of the treaty of Lunigiana. The Emperor and his instructor were alike dreaming of a golden age, *Astræa rediit*, a reign of righteousness and peace. Some words spoken by Henry at Lausanne (*Vill.* ix. 7) reveal a more personal element in Dante's expectations. No envoys met the Emperor there from Florence. He expressed his wonder. The Florentine exiles, who were there in full force, explained that probably the Florentines had not learnt to trust him. "They do ill," he replied, "our intention is one of good-will to all the Florentines without respect of parties, and to make that city our residence (*camera*), the noblest city of our empire." This, then, was what Dante pictured to himself, with that glowing zeal for a city rather than for a country which has been characteristic of most Italian politicians, in his visions of the future. The fair city which he loved was to rise to a new greatness, the daughter of Rome was to be *matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior*, and he was to be recognised as the great benefactor, the true patriot, crowned with the laurel wreath as the *vates sacer* of the new theocracy (*Par.* xxv. 1-9), figuratively, at least, "with crown and mitre on his brow" (*Purg.* xxvii 142), guiding the Universal Empire by his supreme insight both to an earthly and a heavenly blessedness, himself, as in some sense king and priest, by the side of the Emperor, who himself was literally crowned with both crown and mitre, according to the Roman ritual, in St. John Lateran. Alas for the irony of events which such visions made inevitable! It would have been well if the Florentine poet, who studied, and so often quoted, the words of Jeremiah, whose life and character present many parallels to those of that prophet, had done as did another *exul immeritus* of a later age. Exiled, if not from his

country, yet from his home, and from the flock for which he would have laid down his life, Ken took for his watchword, when tempted by the prospects of restored greatness and kingly favour, the warning words which were spoken to the prophet's scholar, *Et tu quæris tibi gratia? Noli quærere.\** We, at all events, as we trace the events of the years that follow in Dante's life, seem to find no words that sum them up so fully and exhaustively as those which follow "Behold, I will bring evil upon all flesh, saith the Lord, but thy life will I give unto thee for a prey," that, and that only, "in all places whither thou goest" (*Jer* xlv 5)

So far as those events belong to European history generally, they may be briefly epitomised. How Henry received the iron crown † of Lombardy, not at Monza, but at Milan, in the Church of St Ambrose, how the envoys came to him from most of the cities of Italy, with the notable exception of the Guelph league, of which Florence was the head, how he sent his imperial vicars to the cities, with the same exception, how he was detained for three months by internal troubles at Milan; how, in April 1311, he took Vicenza and Cremona, and laid siege to Brescia in May, how his brother fell in that siege, and his troops were wasted with pestilence till they were reduced to one-fourth of their original number, how in October he entered Genoa, and there lost his beloved and saintly wife, how the ambassadors whom he sent to Florence were insulted and dismissed, how Brescia again revolted; how Robert, king of Naples, secretly prompted by the Pope, openly took part with the Florentine league, how the Emperor sailed from Genoa to Pisa on the 6th of March 1312, and remained there till the 22d of April, expecting reinforcements from Germany, how the troops of Robert and his allies forced their way to Rome, and occupied the Castle of St. Angelo and the Vatican in order to prevent his coronation, how that ceremony was performed by the Cardinal da Prato in the Church of St. John Lateran on August 1, how, after a short sojourn at Tivoli, he led his forces into Tuscany, and was received with honour at Arezzo, how he failed to push a victory which he gained over the Florentines, and besieged the city in September, laying waste the country round up to the end of October, how his health,

\* The text is found in two books, a *Grotius de Veritate* and a Greek Testament, used by him at this period of his life

† Not, however, the historical iron crown, which had been pledged by Guido della Torre to a Jew, but one made of iron, mounted in gold and set with gems, made on purpose (*former*, p. 42)

already weakened at Brescia, began to give way ; how he was compelled by another epidemic to raise the siege, and returned to Pisa in March 1313 ; how he left on the minds of all men the impression of a character that was never cast down by adversity or elated by prosperity, how he formally summoned Robert of Naples to take his trial as a traitor, condemned him, and started from Pisa to carry his sentence into effect, how he had the promise of help by sea from Frederick of Aragon, king of Sicily, and from the Genoese, how, after halting at Siena, he encamped on the famous field of Montaperti, fell ill, tried the baths of Moncereto without effect, stopped at Buonconvento, and there died, poisoned, some said, by a Dominican friar in the consecrated wafer, on August 24th, how he was buried with all honours in the Cathedral of Pisa, where his tomb still remains in the Campo Santo—all this may be read in full in the Chronicles of Villani, in the memoirs (genuine or apocryphal) that bear the name of Dino Compagni, yet more exhaustively in Irmer's elaborate monograph *Die Romfahrt des Kaiser Heinrich's VII.*\* It might seem almost as if his ill-fortune pursued him even after death. One might have hoped that the sculptor's art would have presented the monumental calm which seems to say, "After life's fitful fever he sleeps well." As it is, Ampère's criticism on the recumbent form is "*Il a l'air de dormir mal.*" Canon Creighton (*Macmillan's Magazine*, March 1874, p. 561) describes the face, with "its broad head, finely-cut features, and delicate chin," as that of a "dreamer who would never have unravelled the tangled web of Italian politics."

What concerns us now is to note the points of contact which this history presents with Dante's life, how he acted at its several stages, how far we may trace his direct or indirect influence in it. Of these I select the most conspicuous instances. It is noticeable from the first that Dante's personal friends are among the Emperor's most devoted and most honoured adherents. Can Grande of Verona, Moroello Malaspina, the Counts Guidi of Casentino, were made imperial vicars or otherwise promoted. Even Cino of Pistoia, though only a man of letters, was made assessor to Count Louis of Savoy, whom the Emperor had named as senator of Rome (*Weg.* p. 231). Looking to Dante's relations with the Polentas of Ravenna,

\* Irmer's book, which reaches me as these sheets are passing through the press, deserves a fuller notice, which I reserve for an *Appendix*.



I venture to trace his influence in the part taken by the Archbishop of that city in bringing about the surrender of Cremona (*Vill* ix. 15). In the readiness shown by the Venetians to pay their homage to the Emperor, and even in the form which that homage took—a silver-gilt throne and a crown of gold, each set with precious stones (*Vill* ix. 14)—I find traces, in like manner, of the artistic imagination which desired to invest the Emperor with all the outward magnificence which was fit for his ideal greatness, perhaps also of Dante's influence with Marco Polo and the other wealthy merchants of Venice. The fact that he was chosen afterwards by Guido da Polenta to negotiate a treaty with the Venetians falls in with the hypothesis that he had previous relations with them (comp. *H.* xxi. 7 n). In the vision of the throne and the crown reserved for Henry in Paradise, as for one who had been before his time (*Par.* xxx. 133), I find an allusion of singular pathos to the crown and throne (probably those just mentioned) which were used at the Emperor's coronation in the Church of St. John Lateran.

Of Dante's own activity we have direct evidence in the series of letters that have fortunately come down to us. In dealing with them, however, we must remember, as in all such cases, from St. Paul's Epistles onward, that what we have is not the measure of the extent of his correspondence, which at this time, probably indeed throughout his life, was energetic and incessant. Filelfo, though not a very trustworthy authority, was probably right when he wrote of Dante "*Edidit et epistolas innumerabiles*" The first of those connected with this period (*Ep* 8) is addressed by him as "*humilis Italus*" (the phrase reminds us of *H* i. 106) "*et exul immeritus,*" \* to all and singular the kings of Italy, to the senators *almæ urbis* (*quæ* Rome or Florence?), to all dukes, marquises, counts, and people. In its lofty idealism, of which Milton's *Address to the Lords and Commons of England* but faintly reminds us, it is little short of the proclamation of a new Messiah by his forerunner, at least the proclamation of a new Cyrus-Messiah by

\* Three fragments are given by Filelfo, the opening words of letters to the King of Hungary and to Boniface VIII, and to his son when studying at Bologna. The second of these belongs apparently to the time when he was working with the Pope (p. lxxv). The last is worth quoting now "*Scientia, mi fili, coronat homines et eos contentos reddit, quam cupiunt sapientes, honorant boni, vituperant mali*" Other fragments, given by Bruni, in which he speaks of his election as Prior as the starting point of all his troubles, and refers to his emotions at the battle of Campaldino, have also been referred to in pp. xlii, lxi. Bruni also speaks of a letter to the people of Florence beginning, "*Popule meus, quid tibi feci?*" which is probably identical with that mentioned in *Vill* ix. 136.

another Isaiah (*Isai.* xlv. 1) "Now is the acceptable time; the new day is dawning on the people who had dwelt in the wilderness. Those who hunger and thirst shall be filled with the light of his beams." The "strong lion of the tribe of Judah" (the Unseen King) has heard the wailings of his people, and has raised up another Moses to lead them out of Egypt into a land flowing with milk and honey. Italy, whom the very Saracens have pitied, is "to welcome her bridegroom, Henry the Compassionate, *Divus et Augustus et Cæsar*," who is hastening to the wedding-feast. He shall smite the wicked with the edge of the sword and shall let out the vineyard (Florence?) to other husbandmen, who shall render the fruits of righteousness in due season, but will also be ready to pardon all who ask for mercy. The seed of the Lombards is called on to lay aside its inherited barbarism, that of the Trojans and Latins (*Purg.* xxxii. 113) is to submit to the Eagle of Heaven (*Par.* vi. 1-9). They are to guard against the greed of gain, which, "after the manner of the Sirens" (*Purg.* xix. 19, xxxi. 45), narcotises the watchfulness of Reason. They will find that in resisting the Empire they resist the ordinance of God. To resist that is to kick against the pricks. To others he turns, in the very language of Jeremiah, bidding them break up their fallow-ground, that, like a fertile valley, they may be clothed with the verdure of peace (*Jer.* iv. 3). Those who have shared the poet's wrongs are to follow him in forbearance ("*parcite, parcite jam ex nunc, carissimi*"). Peace was ready for all who sought it. The Hectorean shepherd (we note the Trojan idea as still dominant) will gather in his strayed sheep into his fold. In him they were to see the predestinated ruler of the world, a predestination traced in the history of Troy and Rome, working through stellar influences and human instruments (*Mon.* 11). Peter, the Vicar of God, had taught obedience to Cæsar; Clement, the successor of Peter, had recognised Henry and had given him his apostolic benediction.

The letter had probably a wider circulation at the time than any other of Dante's writings. It would be sent by special messengers to all the princes, nobles, chieftains, to whom it was addressed. It was written in the first glow of an enthusiastic hope, probably, I infer (for it is undated), between the time of Henry's departure from Lausanne and his passage of Mont Cenis. It belongs obvi-

ously to the same period as the apocalyptic vision of *Purg.* xxxii., xxxiii., and furnishes the key to its interpretation. Henry was the DVX who was to slay the harlot of the Roman Curia and her giant paramour. I conjecture that this letter was, in the case of Florence, accompanied, or shortly followed, by that which began *Popule meus quid tibi feci*, an opening which strikes the keynote of pathetic remonstrance rather than of wrathful threatenings.

The proclamation of the new Baptist was but partially successful. It attracted, as we have already seen, those who were already Dante's associates, but others, notably Florence and her confederates, held aloof and began to organise resistance. The result was another letter from the *exul immeritus* to the *acclandestina Florentini*, couched in very different terms. It is dated March 31, 1312, from *in finibus Tusciæ, sub fontem Sarni*, probably, i.e., from the Casentino, where Dante was staying with the Counts Guidi, waiting for news from Milan. It begins with repeating the assertion that the restoration of the Empire was the end to which God's providence was working. Without it the whole world was going wrong; the pilot and the sailors in the bark of Peter were asleep (comp. *Purg.* xxxii. 129, and the *Navicella* of Giotto in St. Peter's at Rome). He threatens the Florentines, as rebels against it, with the terrors of the "second death" (*II* i. 117). He objects to their argument from the prescription of long-standing usage against the authority of the Emperor. They were setting up the polity (*civitas*) of Florence against that of imperial Rome, taking license for liberty. They had chosen to cast aside the true fear of God, they must be taught by the fear of man. They were trusting in their new fortifications (we are reminded of *Isa.* xxii. 9-11), and the eagle, terrible in its field of gold, would fly upon them, as it had flown over the Pyrenees, Caucasus, Atlas (*Par.* vi. 1-84), and pour out its righteous wrath upon them. They did not choose to yield to the Divine Will, they would have to work it out without their choosing. He, in his divining soul, saw the city given up to slaughter, its churches plundered, wailing women and children in the streets, the greater part of the people slain by the sword or driven into exile. Florence was to become another Saguntum. Did they flatter themselves that they might resist Henry as Parma had resisted Frederick II. ? Let them remember the fate of Milan and Spoleto under Frederick Barbarossa. To those who had eyes to see they

were as men blind, in a dark prison-house, repelling one who came in the fulness of his mercy to set them free. Their covetousness was cheating them with deceitful hopes and false fears. Let them obey the laws of the Empire and they would find that their service was perfect freedom. Finally, as if reserving his sharpest word for the last, he reviles them as the wretched progeny of the men of Fiesole (*Il* xv 62), and calls them to repent before it be too late. Henry is coming, *divus et triumphator*, seeking not his own good, but that of the world at large, "encountering all difficulties for us, of his own free-will bearing our penalties." Isaiah's words were, after their first fulfilment in the Christ, meant for him. "Surely he hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows." He dates his letter significantly as written in the first of the kalends of April, in "the first year of the prosperous campaign of the Emperor Henry."

Prosperous! Alas for the irony of history! Neither threats nor promises availed. The Florentines became conspicuous as the leaders of the league of Tuscany and Romagna, supplied their allies liberally with money, and renewed their condemnation of the exiles. And as yet Henry came not. He had been detained at Milan, as we have seen, till April 1311. The last tidings that had reached Dante were that he had gathered his forces with the intention of attacking Cremona (*Vill* ix 14). The impatience of the exile could no longer restrain itself, that "hope delayed" was more than he could bear. If no one else was bold enough to rebuke the Emperor, he must take that office on himself. And so he sends what is, perhaps, the boldest letter ever written by poet or prophet to a king. The comparison which he himself draws of Samuel's rebuke of Saul furnishes the nearest, almost the only, analogue, unless, perhaps, we reckon Mazzini's letter to Charles Albert as another. He writes in the name of all the Tuscans who desire peace. He and they "kiss the feet" of the Emperor. He begins by complaining that the great enemy of mankind is once again at work to thwart the good purpose of God. When Henry had crossed the Apennines (we note that the term is generalised to include Mont Cenis), very many had hailed his coming as heralding the "*saturnia regna*," the "*virginem reducem*" of Virgil's prophecies (*Ecl* iv.) Now he was lingering and the wheels of his chariot tarried. Like another Baptist (*Luke* vii. 19), Dante and his friends were constrained to ask the question,

"Art thou he that should come, or do we look for another?" Was this the outcome of that interview where he had literally kissed his feet, and inwardly welcomed him as "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world?" They could not understand this delay, as though the Empire did not take in Florence, and were confined within the limits of Liguria. Meanwhile the tyrants of Tuscany were daily growing haughtier and more malignant. It was time to say the words which had been spoken to Cæsar—we remember that Dante (*H* xxviii 93) had placed the speaker of those words in one of the lowest Bolgie—

*"Tolle moras, semper nocuit differre paratis"*

It was time, too, to urge the warning which summoned Æneas from his spell-bound lingering at Carthage, if not for his own sake, yet for that of the young Ascanius (*Æn* iv 272), and to remind the Emperor that he too had an Ascanius in his son, Prince John of Bohemia. He was called, as Saul had been, to smite Agag and Amalek till they were utterly destroyed. What good was it to stay at Milan, striking off the heads of the hydra one by one, to lop the branches of the tree when the axe should be laid to its roots? Florence was the fox's den, and she drank the poisonous waters of the Arno (*Purg* xiv. 19-54). She was the viper that stung her mother, the tainted sheep that spread infection through the flock, the Myrrha whose attempt to lure the Pope to embrace her cause was an incestuous intrigue with her spiritual father. Yea, the offspring of Jesse should delay no longer, should put his trust in the Lord God of Sabaoth, should slay the giant Goliath, so that the darkness of night might cover the camp of the Philistines and the true Israel be restored to freedom. Only so could the sorrow of those Israelites be turned into joy. As it was, they were groaning as exiles at Babylon, remembering Jerusalem.

Henry, as we have seen, did not come with the speed to which Dante urged him, and as regards the attack on Florence, on which Dante's heart was set, the expedition, when he did start, was a failure. How Dante passed the months that came between the date of the letter and the Emperor's death we can only conjecture. It would seem probable that he joined him as soon as he came within the limits of Tuscany; that he was with him, with a revived hope that at last victory was near, at the coronation in St John

Lateran \*—we can imagine with what feelings he would once again tread the streets of the Eternal City—that he was present also at that which brought to his hopes what he would have described as their “second death.” In that grave in the Cathedral of Pisa were buried all the far-reaching schemes over which he had been brooding for at least four years. And, as he looked on the corpse of the Emperor with its *air de dormir mal*, he must have felt that it was almost, if not altogether, his doing. Through him that life, the noblest he had ever known, had been brought to an untimely end, and with it had finished all hopes of the theocratic empire. Of all forms of discipline for such a nature as Dante’s, that was the hardest to bear. We cannot wonder that there should come with it all the signs of a premature old age; that his stoop, as he walked, should become more and more perceptible, his beard and face more swarth and grizzled, as of the man who had seen Hell, his fits of protracted silence and absorbed introspection more frequent, his temper more saturnine and irritable, more impatient of folly and frivolity. He may have found some gleam of comfort in the thought that there was a throne and crown in Paradise for the hero whom he had tempted to an enterprise for which as yet Italy was not ripe (*Par.* xxx 136), in the hope, eternal and indestructible, that the Italy “worthy of triumphal fame” (*Canz.* xx.) would one day be truer to her high calling, and in some sense “*farebb’ da se*.” For the present, however, he had at best to accept the inevitable, and to stand “four-square to the strokes of fortune” (*Par.* xvii 24). We may rest in the belief that by slow degrees he found his way through darkness to light. Exile was bitter. The poverty of the exile—and the failure of the enterprise on which he had staked everything must have deepened that poverty—must have been more bitter still. The stain of infamy still clung to his name, and wherever he went, the ill-natured and the gossips might point to him as the man who had been banished for embezzlement and sentenced to the flames for contumacy. The exiles from whom he had always held aloof in scorn, the Cerehi, Uberti, Salterelli, would look with no kindly feelings on the man who had wrecked their hopes. It was some-

\* I have already referred (p. ci) to the “crown and mitre” of *Purg.* xxvii 242, as probably suggested by the ritual of the coronation. *Par.* xxxi 31-36, in like manner, may well be a reminiscence of the impression by the Lateran and its ceremonial on the Emperor’s German troops.

thing to be able to say at such a time, "*Lascia dir le genti*" (*Purg.* v. 13). It was more, over and above the partial mitigations of the bitterness of exile which will meet us farther on, that he could find strength for the completion of his colossal task, which for well-nigh twenty years had been wearing out health and strength. We may believe that it would scarcely have been completed as it was but for the seeming failure which cast him, after the shipwreck of his highest earthly hopes, upon the rock-bound coast and the howling wilderness. As it was, he turned, as others have turned before and after him, against hope to yet higher hope, and found his faith deepened and purified by the discipline through which he had been led. He who had vainly sought for peace as he knocked at the gate of the monastery of Santa Croce learnt to say, as he put his trust in the Eternal, with the dwellers in Paradise (*Par.* iii. 85)—

"*In la sua voluntade è nostra pace.*"

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## VII.

### WANDERINGS AND DEATH.

The facts of Dante's life after the death of Henry become more and more difficult to fix. More and more did he take his own solitary course (*Par.* xvii. 69). There are no traces of his taking any part in the action of the Ghibelline party at Pisa or elsewhere, and we are left to local traditions and inferential conjectures. The most credible of these represents him as finding a refuge at Gubbio in the house of a Ghibelline friend, Bosone de' Raffaelli, or in his castle, six miles from the town. The name of Bosone, it will be remembered, has already met us as the third in the triad of friends, of whom the other two were Dante and Immanuel ben Salomo (p. lxxiv). An inscription attests the fact in the words, *Hic mansit Dantes Alagherius poeta et carmina scripsit*, but the date and authority of the inscription are open to question, and a sonnet which is shown at Gubbio as having been addressed by Dante to his friend stands on much the same footing. The vividness of the description of the monastery of Santa Croce di Fonte Avellana, in the territory of Gubbio, in *Par.* xxi. 106, gives some colour to the tradition, also attested by an inscription, dated 1557,

in what is pointed out as his cell in the monastery, that he took refuge in the wild solitude of these regions and there "composed no small portion of his great work" (*Frat. V. D* 219) It seems, at any rate, in harmony with Dante's character that he should seek, after the great catastrophe of Henry's death, for solitude and peace In that wild and gloomy region, in the stern discipline of the Camaldolese monks he would find what was most congenial to his temperament and the discipline which he most needed

We seem to stand on somewhat firmer ground when we come across a letter bearing the date of March 30, 1314, addressed by Dante to Guido da Polenta, Lord of Ravenna (*Ep. viii*) We may infer from it that he had been sent to congratulate the Venetians on their election of Giovanni Soranzo as Doge. It is in Italian, and begins abruptly enough, if indeed we have the beginning at all. He could have believed anything rather than what he has actually seen in the great state to which he has been sent. He had looked for a senate of Catos, lofty, high-minded, *rerum dominos, gentemque togatam*, as compared with the parties and factions of other Italian cities. He had found a people oppressed and misgoverned by new-made rulers subverting ancient laws. He had found also an "obtuse and bestial ignorance" He had begun a Latin oration to them in his best style. He might as well have done so at the Antipodes. Scarcely had he begun his exordium, *Lux orta est justo et rectis lætitia*, when he was told that he must either look out for an interpreter or talk Italian. Surprised and indignant, he began a few sentences in what he thought was his mother tongue, Italian as he had learnt to speak it. It was scarcely more intelligible to the senators of Venice than his Latin had been. When he came to think of it, he wondered less. What else could be expected of the descendants of Dalmatians and Greeks? He only begs that his honoured lord (Guido da Polenta) will never send him there on a like embassy again. The letter, if genuine, has the merit of introducing a gleam of the humorous element into the tragedy of Dante's life. I picture the whole scene to myself as one worthy of an artist's study—the "potent, grave, and reverend signiors" sitting in their stately senate-house, the scholar-poet starting grandiloquently, rudely interrupted, burning with indignation. Unhappily, the letter has been rejected by some experts, including Witte, as a forgery As usual in such



cases, there are, however, experts, including Fraticelli, on the other side. *Adhuc sub judice lis est*, and I have no *data* to decide it. On the whole, the apparently trivial character of the letter seems to me in favour of its genuineness. A forger would probably have aimed at something loftier, with a less abrupt opening. Probably what we now have is but a portion of a letter written originally in Latin.

The next document is one the authenticity of which has not been disputed, and it deals with events of greater magnitude. Clement V had died (April 20, 1314), near Carpentras, about sixteen miles from Avignon, and, according to custom, the Cardinals who were there held their conclave at the former city for the election of his successor. The question who that successor was to be was one which naturally agitated the mind of Christendom, specially of the Italian Cardinals, above all of the idealist Ghibelline poet, who was then probably in the monastery of Fonte Avellana. The Italian Cardinals, as we have seen, under the guidance of Orsin and Da Prato, had chosen Clement in the belief that they would find him pliant, and not disinclined to a conciliatory policy towards the moderate Ghibellines. They had been bitterly disappointed. At first, indeed, in the matter of Henry's election, they had found him willing to act with them, but the pressure put on him by Philip the Fair had thwarted their policy. He had made himself the tool of the French king in the suppression of the Templars, with all its monstrous cruelties. He was conspicuous for an all-grasping avarice. He had filled up all vacancies in the Curia with his own Gascon favourites, and when he died, there were but six Italians to seventeen foreigners in the conclave. What their views were—and their views must largely, in the nature of the case, have been shared by Dante—are so well and so concisely expressed by Dean Milman (*L. C.* vii. 334), that I cannot do better than reproduce them —

“With them the primary object was the restoration of the Papacy to Rome. The most sober might tremble lest the Papal authority should hardly endure the continued, if not perpetual, avulsion of the Popedom from its proper seat. Would Christendom stand in awe of a Pope only holding the Bishopric of Rome as a remote appanage to the Pontificate, only nominally seated on the actual throne of St. Peter, in a cathedral unennobled, unhallowed by any of the ancient or sacred traditions of the Cæsarean, the pontifical city? Would it endure a Pope setting a flagrant

example of non-residence to the whole ecclesiastical order; no longer an independent sovereign in the capital of the Christian world, amid the patrimony claimed as the gift of Constantine and Charlemagne, but lurking in an obscure city, in a narrow territory, and that territory not his own! Avignon was in Provence, which Charles of Anjou had obtained in right of his wife. The land had descended to his son, Charles II. of Naples; on the death of Charles, to the ruling sovereign, Robert of Naples. The Neapolitan Angevine house had still maintained the community of interests with the parent monarchy; and this territory of Provence, Avignon itself, was environed nearly on all sides by the realm of France—that realm whose king, not yet dead, had persecuted a Pope to death, persecuted him after death."

At this crisis the Cardinal Napoleon, of the great house of the Orsini, addressed a letter to the King of France, expressing his own regret, and that of the other Italian Cardinals, at the part they had taken in the election of Clement V, and dwelling in strong terms on the vices of his character, his nepotism, his avarice,\* the evils he had brought upon the Church. "They had never contemplated the removal of the Holy See from the sanctuary of the Apostles" (*Milm. L. C* vii. 335).

At this juncture, probably before the letter just quoted, Dante addressed a letter (it has come to us undated) to the Italian Cardinals at Carpentras, reminding them of their duty. He had, on the hypothesis I have suggested, taken part, not without effect, in the election of an Emperor. It was natural that he should think himself called on to intervene in the election of a Pope. The failure of the scheme for the reformation of Italy, and the return of the Florentine exiles, connected with the former, did not exclude the hope of achieving something through the latter. A Pope, guided by Orsini and Da Prato, returning to Rome with the lessons taught by the experience of Avignon, might be a potent element for good. The letter begins with a quotation from Dante's favourite prophet. "How doth the city sit solitary that was full of people! How is she become as a widow that was the

\* Our records at Wells Cathedral furnish some indication of the way in which Clement enriched himself. On May 3, 1314, I find the Dean and Chapter, as collectors of a tax for six years, ordered by Pope Clement for the recovery of the Holy Land, giving a receipt for £200 paid to them for that purpose (*Report on MSS. of Wells*, p. 74, 1885). This was, apparently, the crusade contemplated by Henry VII. That crusade never came off, but the money from Wells, and, we may believe, from all parts of Europe, found its way to the Papal coffers (comp. *Milm. L. C* vii. 369). The Bardi, as noted above (p. xlv), were the collectors of this money in Somersetshire.

mistress of the nations!" (*Lam* i 1; comp *V. N* c 31). What Jeremiah had thus painted, what had been fulfilled in the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, was now the state of Rome. The very Jews and Saracens (*Purg* xxiii. 103, *Par* v. 31) mocked at her, asking, "Where is now their God?" What made matters worse was that astrologers read in this the decree of an inevitable destiny, as though the influences of the stars overpowered the free-will of man (*Purg* xvi 67-84). He, for his part, was compelled to throw the blame on the princes in the first rank of the Church. They had neglected to drive the chariot of the Bridegroom in the track of the Crucified One (*Purg* xxx. 107), and had wandered out of the way like another Phaethon (*Purg* xxix. 118). They had turned their backs and not their faces to that chariot, and had offered strange fire on the altar of the Lord. They were like those who of old bought and sold in the Temple. They had taken part, history repeating itself, as with Demetrius (Philip the Fair?) and Alcinus (Clement V or the future John XXII ?) against the true Israel of God (1 *Macc* vii 9). They might be disposed to look on him, the writer of the letter, as an Uzzah laying his profane hands upon the Ark of God (2 *Sam* vi 7). He was quite aware that he was but as one of the least of the sheep of Christ's flock. He had no riches to give him authority, but by the grace of God he was what he was, and he could say with the Psalmist, "The zeal of thine house hath devoured me." "Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings" God could bring forth His truth, and the blind man had confessed Christ when the Pharisees denied him. He could say with Aristotle, "*Magis amica veritas*," than all others who might claim his friendship. He might rightly come to the aid of the ark without incurring the sin of Uzzah, for he had seen the bark of Christ struggling with the tempest (*Purg* xxxii. 129). On all sides there was but one cry of wailing and lament over the sheep that were left untended in their pastures; yes, every one of them had chosen covetousness and not charity as his bride (*Par*. xi 58-78). The Spouse of Christ had brought forth children by water and the Spirit to her own shame. Not Astraea, not Charity, but the daughters of the horse-leech (*Prov* xxx. 15) were her kin. With the one exception of the Bishop of Luna (at this time a Malaspina), all were alike corrupt. The ancient fathers of the Church, Gregory, Ambrose, Augustine, Dionysius,

Damascenus, Bede (we note the extent of Dante's own patristic reading and his special reverence for the English historian, *Par.* x. 131), were neglected, and instead men were lecturing on the Decretals that had been brought together under the names of Innocents III. and IV., and the wretched commentaries and epitomes based on them, to which all canonists turned as their guide. He, the writer, did not stand alone. All were whispering and thinking as he did. If they held their peace, the Lord, who had spoken of old by Balaam's ass, would yet find an instrument. He turns to his definite purpose in writing, and brings before them the state of Rome, the widowed and bereaved city, deprived of both her luminaries, alike of Emperor and Pope (*Purg.* xvi. 107). He speaks to those especially who have known the sacred Tiber from their infancy, above all to the Cardinal Orsini. He appeals to him so to act that the old foes of his house, the Colonna Cardinals, deprived by Boniface VIII., and only partially restored by Clement V., might re-enter into full possession of their dignities, and to the Cardinal Gaetani, of the family of Boniface VIII., hitherto opposed to them, to lay aside his Traustiberne, *i. e.*, his Guelphic, prejudices. All would be remedied if they would work together to restore the Spouse of Christ to her true seat, and so would work for the good of Rome, of Italy, of the whole company of the pilgrims upon earth. So should they hear a *Gloria in excelsis* (*Purg.* xx. 136), so should the infamy of the Gascons (Clement V.'s Cardinals), foiled and frustrated, become an example to future ages.

One notes, with some wonder, the absence of any special mention of the Cardinal da Prato, with whom we have seen Dante formerly in such full alliance. The inference I draw from the silence is that of him at least he felt sure. The others might want rousing or pressing, but Dante knew that he was simply playing into the hands of the Bishop of Ostia. As it was, his efforts and those of the Cardinals at Carpentras were alike fruitless. After the Papal throne had remained vacant for two years and a half, the choice of the electors fell on the Cardinal of Porto, who took the name of John XXII. He was born in Cahors, the city which had the worst reputation in Europe for its usurers (*II.* xi. 50), and he was worthy of his birth-place. Dante, who saw only the beginning of his Pontificate,

placed him also under the same condemnation as Clement (*Par.* xxvii. 58).\*

The next point at which we get distinct traces of Dante's presence connects itself with the action of the Ghibelline party after Henry VII's death. Pisa, which had all along been faithful to him, and in which his remains were resting, turned at first to Frederick of Aragon, King of Sicily, who had been in alliance with him, and to whom Dante, according to the Ilarian letter, had intended to dedicate his *Paradiso*. That monarch, however, made a "*gran rifiuto*," and contented himself with advising the Pisans to do the best that the sad conditions of the time permitted (*Vill.* ix. 54). They turned, on his refusal, to Uguccione della Faggiuola, to whom, according to the same letter, Dante had sent his *Inferno*, and he accepted the task assigned to him. Contemporary writers speak of him as a man of great courage, tell of deeds of personal prowess, and describe him as a man gifted with a power of eloquent utterance that won all hearts—altogether another model of the chivalry that Dante admired. Henry VII had made him Imperial Vicar of Genoa, he took the burden from which Frederick of Arragon shrunk, and at the head of the Ghibelline forces took possession of Lucca on June 14, 1315, driving out the Guelphs and the vicar of King Robert of Naples. Lucca accordingly became an asylum for the wandering exiles of Florence, and Dante, later in the year, found his way there, and remained under Uguccione's protection, probably till April 1316, when the tide of fortune turned and that leader lost his hold both on Lucca and Pisa. Memories of that sojourn meet us in *Purg.* xxiv. 37. From the lips of Bonagiunta of Lucca he had almost whispered the name of Gentucca, she is described afterwards as being, at the assumed date of the vision (1300), still in early girlhood, and as one for whose sake Dante would look on that city with something like delight. The passage, as might be expected, has given rise to much discussion. The unclean birds of literature, that scent carrion everywhere, the "apee by the Dead Sea," who make mouths at every prophet as he passes by,

\* Here again our local records throw light on the greater drama of the world's history. The Register of Bishop Droghda of Bath and Wells (1309-20) records an order from John XXII to reserve, on the ever ready ground of a contemplated crusade and other pious uses, the incomes of forty six of the best livings in the diocese for the Papal treasury. Fancy that kind of thing going on through the length and breadth of Western Europe!

pounce upon it after their manner. Here, they say, *Habemus contentem reum*, here is another of the *amori* of the man who was conspicuous for his *lussuria*. What makes the matter worse is that the only Gentucca whom the researches of antiquarios can trace in the archives of Lucca was the wife of Bernardo Morla, of a branch of the Allacighi family. Well, commentators and biographers of prurient imaginations are, I suppose, "capable of anything." I can conceive men of this class echoing the slanders which were whispered against Hooker when he, in Izaak Walton's phrase, was "trepanned" into circumstances that gave colour for a like accusation, or commenting on Ken's intimacy with the ladies of Naish Court, or the devout young Nonconformist poetess of Frome, as open to grave suspicion. But I confess that if I were a rising young barrister, I should desire nothing better than to hold a brief for the defendant in such a case as this. I should urge that Dante was not a Boccaccio, nor a Byron, not even an Abelard or a Petrarch. I should dwell on the utter absence of evidence beyond the distorted interpretation of Dante's own words, and the absolute incredibility of his perpetuating, in the very poem in which he is describing his purification as a penitent, the memory of a doubly adulterous intrigue. I should represent that the only natural, the only reasonable, almost the only possible, interpretation of his words is that which sees in them the thankful acknowledgment of a pure and sympathising friendship. Crushed and broken down by sorrow, after long months of rigorous, if salutary, discipline at the monastery of Fonte Avellana, the exile finds himself for a short period in something like a home. He meets with a refined and educated lady who can understand him, who can enter into his thoughts as a poet, can listen to the story of his sorrows, and share without jealousy his reverence for Beatrice. And on these grounds I should claim from the jury, as I now claim from those who, now or hereafter, shall read my *Apologia*, a verdict of "Not Guilty," accompanied by the declaration that the accused leaves the court without a stain upon his character.

That sojourn at Lucca, with its pleasant river and fair fields for walks or bathing (*H.* *xxi* 49), its memories of the Santo Volto and of Santa Zita (*H.* *xxi* 38-48), must have been as an oasis in Dante's wanderings in the wilderness of exile. It was not, however, to be his rest. In August 1315, Uguccone—guided, I con-

ceive, by the poet's counsels—resolved on offensive operations against Florence, and advanced so far as to lay siege to Montecatini in the Val di Nievole, within ten miles of that city. The Florentines sent to all their allies for aid, and their language is that of men thoroughly alarmed. "Come over and help us, the need is pressing. A little delay may lead to the greatest danger." The allies came in full force, commanded by the two brothers of Robert of Naples, and the Florentines found themselves with an army of 3200 horse and 25,000 foot. There had been no such battle fought since that in which the waters of the Arbia were crimsoned with the blood of the slain (*H* x 86). Uguccione gained a decisive victory. One of the Neapolitan princes was slain. Florence and her allied cities were filled with wailing and lamentation. Dante's health and age (he was now over fifty, and worn with study and with sorrow) may have hindered his taking part in the battle, but the Florentines seem to have known whom they had to thank for their losses, and in November a third edict of condemnation was issued against him by Ranieri di Zuccaria, King Robert's vicar at Florence. He and his brother exiles who had come within the frontiers of Tuscany, and had not paid the fine which they incurred by so doing, and his sons, are condemned to lose their heads. The mention of the latter is not without interest in its bearing on Dante's life, as showing that some of them, most likely the two eldest, Pietro and Jacopo, were no longer in Florence, but had probably been with their father at Lucca. They would now be about eighteen or twenty, and we can reasonably think of them as trying to understand the workings of the myriad-minded man with whom they were now in contact, possibly as laying up materials for their future exposition of his great work.

The aspect of things, however, changed for the worse. Uguccione, who had lost a son at Montecatini, became suspicious and severe. Prominent citizens at Pisa and at Lucca were beheaded by him and by his son (Podestà of the latter), and the population of these cities rose simultaneously in rebellion against them on April 3, 1316, and drove them out. Once more the cup of hope was dashed from the lips of the exile. Uguccione, probably Dante with him, took refuge in the Lunigiana, with one of the ever-hospitable house of Malaspina (*Purg* viii 121-132). The Florentines, now free from all immediate danger, made peace with Pisa,

elected (October 1316) a more conciliatory Podestà, Count Guido da Batifolle, and in December resolved on something like an amnesty (*Vill.* ix. 71-79). I note the fact that Villani, the historian, was in that year one of the Priori, and negotiated the treaty with Pisa, and think it more than probable that he, Dante's neighbour and friend (*Vill.* ix. 136), not without memories of the time they had spent together at Rome in the year of the Jubilee (*Vill.* viii. 36), had urged the measure with a view to the poet's return. The amnesty, however, was not unconditional. The exiles who availed themselves of the amnesty were to pay a certain sum according to the measure of their guilt, to walk with the malefactor's cap (a kind of paper mitre, like that worn by heretics at an *auto-de-fé* of the Inquisition in Spain) on their heads and holding a wax-taper in their hands behind the chariot of the Mint (I note again that Villani was at this time Master of the Mint at Florence) to the Church of St. John, and there to make an expiatory offering to the saint.

The conditions were accepted by many of Dante's companions, who appeared in due form in the procession on the festival of St John the Baptist, 1317 (June 24th)—the Tosinighi, Rinucci, and others—but he himself would not receive them.\* It was not thus that he would revisit his "beautiful St. John." The letter in which he conveyed his refusal to a Florentine friend\* has often been reprinted, and is probably familiar to most of my readers, but it is so eminently characteristic that no life of Dante would be complete without it.—

"I have learnt from your letters, received by me with all due reverence and affection, after careful consideration and with a grateful mind, how fully your heart is set on my return to my country; and I am all the more bound by a strong sense of obligation, since it is rarely the lot of exiles to find friends. Wherefore I make my answer to what they communicate, and if my reply should not be such as the pusillanimity of some would wish, I affectionately entreat you before you condemn it to weigh it well and with mature deliberation.

"Behold then that which, through the letters of your nephew and mine,

\* Two identifications of the friend are possible. He and Dante had the same nephew (1) A sister of Dante's was married to Leone Poggi, and had a son, Andrea. The friend may have been a Poggi. (2) One of his brothers, married to a Piera Brunacci, had a son, Durante, and the friend may have been of that house. Looking to the prominence assigned to Andrea in *Bocc. V. D.*, I slightly incline to (1) and in any case, the words "my father" point to an ecclesiastic.



and of many other friends, has been conveyed to me as to the ordinance recently made at Florence touching the return of the exiles, that, should I be willing to pay a certain sum of money and submit to the degrading ceremony of oblation,\* I may remain as pardoned and forthwith return. Ah! my father, here are two things, to say the truth, ridiculous and ill-considered. I say 'ill-considered' in regard of those who have thus expressed their intentions, for as for your letters, conceived more discreetly and more thoughtfully, they contained nothing of the kind.

"And is this then the glorious manner by which Dante Alighieri is recalled to his country after having endured exile for well-nigh fifteen years? Has his innocence, manifest to all men, has his continual labour and toil in study, deserved this? Far be this ill-advised humility of the earthly heart from one who belongs to the household of philosophy (*H* iv 39), that he, after the fashion of a 'Ciolo' (presumably some notorious malefactor, but there is a v. l. *sciole* = sciolist, pretender, or charlatan), "and other wretches of ill-fame, should, as if admitting defeat, suffer himself to be thus offered. Far be it from one who is a preacher of righteousness, that, having suffered wrong, he should pay money to those who did the wrong, as though they were his benefactors.

"No, my father, this is not my way of returning to my country (*Par* xxv 1-9), but if any other can be discovered, by you or by others, which does not derogate from Dante's fame and honour, I will, with no lingering steps, accept it. But if by such a course there is no entrance to Florence found for me, Florence I will never enter. What? Cannot I everywhere look out on the sun and on the stars† Can I not, everywhere under heaven, contemplate the truths that are most sweet and precious, unless I first submit myself to the people and state of Florence, stripped of my honour and clothed in ignominy? Bread, I imagine, will not fail me."

The gates of Florence were thus self-closed by the exile against his return. There came, of course—perhaps it had come before—the question where he was to go. Among the Ghibelline leaders who had gathered round Henry of Luxemburg there was, now that Uguccone had fallen from his power, but one man of mark, Francesco, better known as the Can Grande della Scala of Verona, who by the death of his father Albert (1301) and his brothers Bartholomew (1304) and Alboino (1311) was now lord of that

\* Not merely that he would have had to make an expiatory offering, but that his own position would have been that of a criminal, finding, as it were, an asylum in the protection of the Baptist.

† We note the parallelism with the fact that each division of the *Commedia* ends with the word "*stelle*."

city. He had been made an Imperial Vicar by Henry, and in 1318 was chosen as leader of the Ghibelline party. Dante had probably seen him in one or more passing visits in the early years of his exile (1303 or 1308), when he was scarcely out of his boyhood, and had recorded the expectations which he then formed in the well-known "Veltro" or "greyhound" prophecy of *H.* l. 101, which marked him out as one who should do great things for the good not of Verona only, but of all Italy. To him, accordingly, Dante, accompanied by Uguccone, now turned,\* about the close of the year 1316. Can Grande kept a stately court, patronised arts, had his palace adorned with paintings and sculptures adapted to the different characters of his guests (*Faur.* l. 233), which may possibly, as some have thought, have suggested the imagery of *Purg.* x 30-105, xii. 16-69. Dante was received as an honoured guest, and in return resolved to dedicate the *Paradiso*, originally intended, it will be remembered, for Frederick of Arragon, to his new patron. In *Par.* xvii. 70-90 he had already immortalised his fame by an eulogy magnificent as that on the Malaspini in *Purg.* viii. 121-131. So far as the dedication deals with the plan and import of the poem, it will come before us elsewhere, but it supplies also materials of biography which have their right place here. It is undated, but we must at least assume that it was written after, or a very short time before, the completion of the *Paradiso*, that there must have been time for writing the fifteen Cantos of the poem which came after the eulogium of Canto xvii, and this would bring us, in all likelihood at least, to the early months of 1318. Up to that date, then, there is evidence that there had been no breach of continuity in the friendship of the two men. The warmth of that friendship is indicated in every line of the dedicatory letter. He describes himself as *devotissimus*, he wishes his protector a long and happy life, an ever-increasing and perpetual fame. He had heard of him before his arrival at Verona. He came thither as the Queen of the South came to Jerusalem, as Pallas came to Helicon (*Met.* v. 254-267),

\* Some commentators, notably Troya, have identified Uguccone himself with the "Veltro," and they have a fairly strong case. It seems to me quite possible that when Dante wrote the first Canto of the *Inferno* his hopes may have hovered between the two, and that, sending the poem to Uguccone, he purposely wrote his oracle so that it might apply to either. At any rate, it is curious to think of the poet at Verona on terms of intimacy with the two claimants, one of whom had failed to fulfil the prophecy, while the other was at the height of fame, and able to inspire hopes of its fulfilment in the near future.

the Bible and Ovid joined together, as commonly in Dante's thoughts. Like them, he found that he had heard a true report, but that it was surpassed by the reality. He saw Can Grande's magnificence, he experienced his goodness. Admiration and goodwill passed into a devoted friendship. Did that word seem too bold? He would justify it by the many examples which history presented of friendship between the great and lowly, by the fact that friendship was possible even between God and man (*Wisd* vii. 14). He wished to make some return, in proportion to his power, for all that he had received. He looked over all his writings with that intention, and finally selected the *Paradiso*. Its very title was a forecast of the glory of his benefactor's name. And so he proceeds to the analysis of the poem, with which we are not at present concerned. Even there also, in his patron's court, however, he found the salt savour of the bread which a man eats at another's table (*Par* xvii. 58). I do not attach much weight to the gossip of Boccaccio, Sacchetti, and other writers of the valet type, but the anecdotes which they record are in themselves not improbable. They speak of the lofty, almost arrogant, pride of the poet, which made him unpopular among Can Grande's courtiers. They tell how his patron asked him why it was that a buffoon won greater favour with men than he with all his genius, and that he made answer that it was because "like loves like" (*Petr. Rer. Mem.* in *Trab* v. 27), how that as he sat in meditative reverie at his host's table, his companions played the practical joke of heaping up the bones left by all the guests at his feet, and laughed at him for his enormous appetite, and that he replied that had he been a "big dog" (*can grande*) they might have been his (*Arriv* p. 225). \* Such things were natural enough, and we can understand that, as they became more frequent, he would sigh for a more secluded retirement, and that his thoughts would turn to Guido da Polenta of Ravenna, who had, as we have seen, already employed him in a mission to Venice (p. cxi). The whisperings of the pine woods of Chiassi (*Purg.* xxviii. 20) were more congenial to him than the coarse jesting which disturbed his tranquillity and made him speak unadvisedly with his lips. I do not find any evidence that his personal regard

\* In *Conv.* li. ix we have the noticeable statement that if "cortesy" were to be interpreted as meaning the actual manner of the courts of Italy, it would connote "all that was most foul and base" (*surpenna*). This, however, was written some years before his stay at Verona.

for Can Grande himself suffered any serious or permanent diminution. When, as I conceive, he returned to Verona, after a temporary absence, in January 1320 (1321?), and delivered his lecture *De Aquâ et Terrâ* (of which more hereafter) in the Church of St. Helena, it was in his patron's presence, and he still praises him as an "unconquered lord." Looking to the closing of the dedication letter (*Ep.* xi. c. 32), in which he speaks of his poverty as compelling him to leave untouched tasks that might be useful to the state, and to the hopes he expresses that the bounty of Can Grande will in this matter come to his assistance, I incline to the belief that he was helped by that bounty to continue the study and the experiments of which the lecture *De Aquâ et Terrâ* was the outcome. Apparently he left his sons at Verona, and they probably remained there. They continued, at all events, to reside in that city after their father's death.

Of the life at Ravenna we have but scanty records. It lies in the nature of the case that it was a much quieter life than that at Verona. In order to understand it, we must remember that Dante's great work, on which he had spent the labour of twenty years, was now brought to its completion, and that there was a consequent blank in his life. It is not without a senso of satisfaction that we note as probable the fact that those last years at Ravenna were cheered by the presence of his daughter Beatrice, whose very name recalled all that was most precious in the history of that poem from its *genesis* to its completion, and whom we find, long after his death, as a nun in a convent at Ravenna. Such a mind as his, however, could not remain inactive, and it would seem that he occupied himself (1) with the physical science studies, to which he had always been addicted, and of which we find the fruits in the treatise or lecture just mentioned, in which he speaks of himself as having from youth upward been occupied in like investigations, (2) in a return to the classical pursuits of his early years. Of the latter we have evidence in the interesting eclogues which passed between him and a friend, whose name has hitherto not come across our path, Joannes de Virgilio, and which help, if I mistake not, to throw light on the closing years of his life. Of that friend we know comparatively little. The name by which he was known, in place of any inherited patronymic, indicates that he was devoted to the study of Virgil, that he was recognised as a master of

Virgilian style, and that was, of course, a bond of union between him and the Florentine poet. We know further that he was born at Bologna, that he was paid by the authorities of that city as a classical teacher, and that he was, though probably much younger, sufficiently intimate with Dante to be able to write to him on terms of equality. Dante, as we shall see, held his own, but it was apparently a refreshment to his wearied spirit to come into contact with a younger mind of tastes congenial with his own, and to go back to the forms of composition which had once been the delight of his own youth, the ground, perhaps, on which his earliest fame had rested (*II* 1 87). As we have seen a man like Cardinal Newman amusing his old age by adapting a play of Terence for the pupils of a seminary, so it would seem to have been a refreshment to Dante, when his great task was ended, to write Virgilian eclogues. For us, at all events, they have the interest of being the only samples extant of Dante's Latin verse, an indication of what might have been had he written the *Commedia*, or ventured on handling other subjects, in that form. The letters are, it will be seen, rich in biographical materials.

The correspondence begins with a letter eclogue from the scholar to the master. The former begins with complimenting his friend on his great work. The subject was lofty and grand, but why did he address such high matters to the profane vulgar in their own speech? He might reply that, though he wrote in the vulgar tongue of Italy, he yet addressed himself to scholars. Yes, was the answer, but scholars despise that tongue in all its varieties. He had placed himself as sixth in the goodly company of Latin poets (*II* iv 102), why should he not write, as they did, in their language? It was a mistake to cast his pearls before swine. Lofty subjects remained to be treated—the expedition of Henry VII., the exploits of Uguccone, the wars of Can Grande with Padua, of Robert of Naples with Genoa. These would give an epic by him a widespread and lasting fame. He could promise him an ovation and the laureate crown at Bologna. Would not Dante visit him and talk the matter over?

Dante makes answer, not, I think, without a playful irony at the advice which the younger scholar had given him. He adopts at once the Virgilian form of eclogue. He is Tityrus, the old man who had found in the protection of Augustus the peace

and safety which enabled him to write poetry. His young friend is Mopsus. Melibœus (= a Dino Perini of Florence (p. lxxviii)) was with him when he had received the letter. He had told him its substance, and had given his reasons for not acting on it. The fame and glory of poets had passed away. Even Mopsus (Joannes) had not known the sleepless nights by which the Muse is won. And he, for his part, preferred to shun the city where he would find but scanty welcome, and to wait till he could crown his grey hairs with the laurel wreath on the banks of the Arno (*Par* xxv 1-9). He would wait till his *Purgatory* and *Paradise* were made *publici juris*, as his *Hell* had already been, and stake his chance on that. True, Mopsus found fault with his writing in the vulgar tongue, and Dante read his criticism to Melibœus. How should they bring the Virgilian scholar to a better mind? To do this Tityrus would send ten vessels of milk from his choicest ewe, probably, i.e., ten Cantos of the *Purgatorio* or *Paradiso*.

Joannes returns to his remonstrance. He had received the precious MS. at Bologna. It seemed to him as though he heard the melodious murmur of the pine woods of Ravenna. But would not the "divine old man" whom he admired grant him one more favour. Rightly was he indignant with Florence. Would he not visit him, as he had already pressed him to do, at Bologna? There he would find the warmest welcome. Was not his house as safe a refuge as that of Iolas (= Guido da Polenta)? Admiration had ripened into love. Yes, he would give him, though it might be equivalent to sending milk to a shepherd (as we say, ("coals to Newcastle")), poems for poems.\* Would Iolas grudge the visit?

Tityrus, however, turned a deaf ear to the entreaties of his Mopsus. With a somewhat complicated symbolism he compares Bologna, to which Joannes invited him, to the Cyclops' cave, and he dreads finding a Polyphemus in the Count Romeo de' Pepoli, who ruled that city. He prefers the dewy pastures of Pelorus which he finds in Ravenna. Yes, Romagna, after all, was the true Sicily, the true poets' land for him, and he would remain with Iolas.

\* Unconscious resemblances are always the most interesting, and, if I mistake not, the reader who shall compare this invitation with that which Tennyson addressed to b D Maurice in 1853 will thank me for suggesting the comparison.

Such is the last glimpse we get of Dante's mental life. The eclogue did not reach his friend till after the hand that wrote it was stiff and cold. There was a difference which threatened to pass into a quarrel between Venice and the Lord of Ravenna. At Guido da Polenta's request, Dante, in spite of the *fiasco* of his former embassy (p. cx1), undertook a mission to arrange conditions of peace. It is probable that he took the opportunity of thus visiting the North of Italy to read the lecture *De Terra et Aqua* at Verona, and then went on to Venice. His mission was not more successful than the former one had been. The Senate was shy and suspicious, and refused to hear him at any length. When he asked permission to return to Ravenna in one of their ships on the ground of health, they refused, as dreading lest his subtle power of suasion should affect the loyalty of their admiral. He had to return through the singularly unhealthy region that lies between Venice and Ravenna in the most unhealthy period of the year (July or August), caught a fever, which rapidly mastered him, and died, under Guido da Polenta's roof, on September 14, 1321, at the age of fifty-six years and four months. So the life of the poet-prophet, with all its marvellous capacities, and strange experiences of joy and sorrow, and far-reaching knowledge and lofty aspirations, with its frustrated hopes and unfulfilled ideals, with one hope, the hope of an eternal fame, not frustrated, and one aspiration, we may trust, the aspiration after eternal life, abundantly fulfilled, came to its close, and the soul passed behind the veil to one of the mansions of the Father's house, for whatever discipline of purification or crown of righteousness the Eternal Wisdom and Love, after which, amid all seeming failures and partial waverings of faith, and sins of spirit or of sense, he had at least striven, saw fit to assign to him.

According to one tradition (not perhaps very trustworthy), Dante's body was laid out, by his own desire, in the garb of a Franciscan friar, as though the approach of death had brought back the memory of the earlier period of his life, revived, it may be, by the admiration for the great Saint of Poverty expressed in *Par.* xi. Another tradition, not absolutely incompatible with this, runs to the effect that Guido da Polenta gave him a stately funeral, in which the body was seen with the poet's wreath of laurel on its head and the poet's lyre laid at its feet. Two epitaphs are on

record, one reported to have been written by Dante himself, and still to be read on the tomb at Ravenna —

S. V. F.

(probably *Sibi Vivens Fecit* )

*Iura Monarchiæ, Superos, Flégetonta lacusque  
Lustrando, cecini, voluerunt fata quousque,  
Sed quia pars cessit melioribus hospita castris,  
Auctoremque suum petiit felicior astris,  
Hic claudor Dantes, patris extorris ab oris,  
Quem genuit parvi Florentia mater amoris.*

---

“The laws of empire and the heavenly host,  
The fiery lake and Phlegethon's dark coast,  
These have I seen, of these have told the tale,  
So long as fates propitious might prevail  
Now that my better part has fled as guest,  
In happier regions finding peace and rest,  
To its Creator soaring high and far,  
In bliss and joy above each brightest star,  
Here am I laid, I, Dante, far from home,  
Exiled, from that fair city doomed to roam,  
To whom I owed my birth, who yet did prove  
To me, her child, without a mother's love ”

Grave reasons have, however, been urged (*Frat. V. D. c. 10*) against accepting those lines as authentic, and we have to fall back on the statement of Villani and Boccaccio that the first inscription on Dante's grave was written by the scholar-friend whose correspondence with him has come before us, Joannes de Virgilio.

*Theologus Dantes, nullius dogmatis expertus,  
Quod foveat claro philosophia sinu,  
Gloria Musarum, vulgo gratissimus auctor,  
Hic jacet, et famâ pulsat utrumque polum.  
Quis loca defunctis gelidis, regnumque gemellum  
Distribuit logicis rhetoricisque modis  
Pascua Pieris demum resonabat avenis  
Atropos heu ! lectum livida rapit opus  
Hunc ingrata tulit tristem Florentia fructum,  
Exilium nato patria cruda suo.*



*Quem pia Gurdonis gremio Ravenna Novelli  
Gaudet honorati concubuisse Ducis.  
Mille trecentenis ter septem Numinis annis  
Ad sua Septembris ulibus astra redit.*

---

"Here Dante lies, divine, to whom 'twas given  
To know each dogma of the truth of Heaven,  
Which Wisdom true within her breast doth cherish,  
The Muses' son, whose fame shall never perish,  
Who won men's hearts by singing in their tongue,  
And gained a world-wide fame by what he sung,  
Who with his subtle speech has painted well  
That twofold Kingdom and the icy Hell,  
And then at last made glad each verdant lawn  
With sweetest notes from reeds Pierian drawn  
Ah me ! pale Atropos that wish has marred,  
And Florence, thankless to her son ill-starred,  
Has from her cruel breast her offspring sent  
To end his days in lifelong banishment.  
Ravenna boasts that here he passed to rest  
Upon her honoured leader Guido's breast,  
In year one thousand, hundreds three, thrice seven,  
September's ides, he sought his stars in Heaven " \*

Here I end what I have to say of Dante's life. Of the subsequent history of his resting-place and of his family, of some points connected with the plan of his great work and the date and history of the others, of the estimate formed of him by his contemporaries and by posterity, of his influence on the literature of Europe and the politics of Italy, I shall speak, if my limits permit, in the Appendix to vol II

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## NOTE

Dr George Irmer's *Romfahrt Kaiser Heinrich's VII* is, as I have already said, a valuable contribution to the history of Dante's time. In the archives of Coblenz there are three MSS, each of them of the

\* It is noticeable that each of the epitaphs speaks of the "stars," as Dante had spoken in the last lines of each part of the *Commedia*.

nature of a contemporary chronicle of the chief events in the life of Archbishop Baldwin, the youngest brother of the Emperor Henry of Luxemburg. One of these consists of seventy-three coloured drawings, representing every memorable incident, from the election of the boy-archbishop—he was but twenty-two at the time, and Papal dispensations were necessary to vindicate his consecration from the charge of irregularity—to the Emperor's death and interment. These have been reproduced in *facsimile* at the cost of the Prussian Government, and Dr Irmer's letterpress which accompanies them is of the nature of an elaborate historical and archaeological commentary. The artist clearly accompanied the Emperor's expedition, and here and there are found marginal notes in the Archbishop's handwriting. So far the work has all the interest of being that of a contemporary and eye-witness. In dealing with the previous history of the house of the Counts of Luxemburg, and in all that concerns the expedition as seen from a German point of view, Dr Irmer's share of the work is sufficiently exhaustive, to the extent of identifying, at every stage, the armorial bearings of every banner or shield that appears in the several illustrations. It will be worth while to note the facts which have not already been noted in my summary of the history, and which present any points of possible contact with Dante's life.

The Emperor's father, Count Henry of Luxemburg, had a high reputation for courage, generosity, and the charm of a genial and chivalrous presence. His brother Walram was known as "*pulcherrimus hominum*." They both died in battle against the Duke of Brabant in 1288. Henry seems, from Dante's account of him (*Epp.* 5, 7), to have inherited their personal advantages. His mother, Beatrice, daughter of Baldwin, Count of Avesnes—one wonders whether the name attracted Dante—was left with three sons, the future Emperor, born *circa* 1272, Walram, born 1280, and Baldwin, born 1285. Henry soon began to show himself a worthy son of his father, forgave the knight who had dealt that father's death-blow, founded monasteries in the Luxemburg territory, and acted throughout in the spirit of the world which, as Emperor, he chose for the motto of his seal, *Iuste iudicate, filii hominum*. One can hardly help thinking that that choice was present to Dante's mind when he wrote his vision of the *Diligite iustitiam qui iudicatis terram* in *Par.* xviii 76-99. In 1290 he was knighted by Philip the Fair of France, and in 1292 was married to Margaret of Brabant, of whom the chroniclers always speak as singularly devout and saintly. The third son, Baldwin, studied at Paris in 1299—one notes, as bearing on the age of university students, that he was then only fourteen. He was still pursuing his studies there in 1307. One of Dante's probable visits to Paris falls within those limits, and Henry himself was there with his brother in 1304.

Probably they became acquainted there with Luitpold von Bebenberg, afterwards counsellor to Baldwin, who had studied at Bologna, and who wrote a book, presumably on the lines of the *De Monarchia*, with the title *De Regno et Imperio*.

In 1307 Baldwin, still at Paris, received the news of his election as Archbishop by the Dean and Chapter of Trèves. He and Henry had both been present at the enthronement of Clement V. at Lyons. They found no difficulty in obtaining at his hand the necessary dispensations, and Baldwin was consecrated by him in the Cathedral of Poitiers, March 10, 1308. On their return to Trèves in May, they were met by the tidings of the assassination of the Emperor Albert (May 1), by his nephew, John of Suabia. The young Archbishop found himself suddenly raised to a position of supreme importance. He was one of the electors of the Empire; it was his function, as Chancellor of the Empire, to summon the other electors. There was a rumour that Albert, as he was dying, had recommended Henry as his successor. The two brothers resolved that they would work together for the Imperial crown. Dr Irmér tells the tale, as Menzel tells it, from the German point of view, speaks superciliously of Malaspina and Dino Compagni, and, curiously enough, makes not the slightest allusion to Villani. We are therefore left without any materials that connect themselves with the Italian intrigues and wire-pulling of which the last-named historian tells, and in which I think I can trace Dante's hand. All that can be said is that the facts which I have now epitomised are perfectly compatible with the inferences to which I have been led, and that they supply additional evidence of possible opportunities of a personal acquaintance on Dante's part both with the Archbishop and the Emperor.

When we enter on the actual history of the expedition to Italy, we are led over the same ground as that which we have already travelled, and it does not seem necessary to go over that ground again. What one notes in addition is that the Archbishop accompanied his brother from the first, almost to the close of the Emperor's life, returning to Trèves with a view to collecting reinforcements only a few months before his death, that the Empress Margaret and his younger brother, Walram, were also with him—the latter, it will be remembered, fell in battle at Brescia, the former died at Genoa, that with the exception of his rigorous treatment of Cremona and Brescia, the Emperor's conduct was characterised by a chivalrous generosity, that he halted to keep every great Church festival with a devout reverence, that Florence was throughout the leader of the Guelph opposition to his claims, backed at first secretly, and then openly, by King Robert of Naples, that the Cardinal da Prato appears in Irmér, as in Villani, as his constant and most indefatigable supporter; that his chosen counsellor during the

whole expedition was Nicolaus, a Dominican friar, probably from Luxemburg, and Bishop of Butrinto in Albania (*Murat. ix. p. 386*). But it is disappointing to find that the German standpoint is still that from which the whole story is told; that the names of the Italian adherents of the Ghibelline cause are almost conspicuous by their absence; that Dante and Can Grande come in only for a passing notice; that Ugucione della Fagguola, Morcello Malaspina, and Cino da Pistoia are not even named. Irmer conjectures that Dante's first interview with the Emperor was at Turin, and thinks it improbable that he was among the Italian delegates who met the Emperor at Genoa; in neither case, it seems to me, on sufficient grounds. Among facts of which we can only say that they may have had a special interest for Dante, one notes the presence in Henry's army of one who was a poet as well as a knight, Walter von Homburg, whose exquisitely tender farewell to his wife on starting for Italy Irmer has happily given us, and, as an example of the irony of history which marks the whole course of Henry's progress, his founding in February 1313, six months before his death, on the site of the old town of Poggibonai—it had held out for Manfred and had been destroyed by the Guelphs after his death—a new city which was intended to be a memorial of Henry's triumph under the ambitious title of Monte Imperiale. Dr Irmer gives, as the frontispiece of his volume, a photograph of the Emperor's head on the tomb which is now in the Campo Santo of Pisa, and so enables one to recognise the dreamy, idealist look, the *air de dormir mal*, of which I have already spoken. He furnishes the fact that the monument was erected by the Pisans, throughout conspicuous for their devotion to the Emperor, in 1315, and gives the striking words which come at the close of the inscription, *Quicquid facimus venit ex allo*, but he does not notice that at that time Pisa was governed by Ugucione della Fagguola, Dante's friend, or what seems to me the eminently Dantesque character of the Latin words, as summing up his acceptance of the inscrutable decrees which had shattered all the hopes that the Florentine exile had so fondly cherished. Lastly, he records what is not without a touching pathos for us, that every year a solemn requiem is still sung in the Cathedral of Pisa on August 24th, as the anniversary of the Emperor's death.

**Incipit**  
**Comœdia Dantis Alagherii,**  
**Florentini,**  
**Ratione, non moribus.**

# HELL.

## CANTO I

*The Wild Wood—The Bewildered Traveller—The Mountain Delectable—The  
Three Beasts of Prey—Virgil to the Rescue—Prophecy of the Greyhound.*

WHEN our life's course with me had halfway sped,  
I found myself in gloomy forest dell,  
Where the straight path beyond all search had fled  
Ah me! hard task it were in words to tell  
What was that wood, wild, drear, and tangled o'er,       5  
Which e'en in thought renews that terror fell!

<sup>1</sup> We are unable to fix with precision the date (probably circ. 1302-3) when Dante first entered on the work of writing the *Commedia*. He has defined with the utmost care the time at which its action opens. He has reached the "half way" point of the threescore years and ten which he, with the Psalmist (*Ps* xc. 10), recognised as the normal standard of man's life (*Conv* iv. 23), and as he was born in A.D. 1265, this brings us to A.D. 1300. The sun is in the sign of Aries (l. 38), the date (March 25), according to medieval tradition, of the Creation and the Incarnation. And, as we learn later on (*C* xxi. 119), it was on the morning of Good Friday that the narrative of his experience begins. On that day, at the same age (*Conv* lc), the Christ had died. It was a memorable epoch in the poet's life. In that year (June 15) he was chosen as one of the Priori of Florence, and to that election he looked back as the *finis et origo* of all his after troubles (*Ueg* p. 143). Earlier in the year (*Ueg* p. 140), he had probably been sent on a mission to Boniface VIII., who was then keeping the great Jubilee which he had proclaimed on the Christmas Day of 1299. He was there, it may be, at the very date which he fixes for his vision, and his friend Giotto, and Villani, the future historian of Florence, were with him (*Crone*, p. 233). When he looked back upon the Easter-tide of that year, it came before him as the great crisis of his life. He had fallen from his "first love" (*Purg* xxx. 124-125), and was wandering in ways that were not good. Inwardly and outwardly, morally and politically, he was without guidance, and a horror of great darkness fell upon him. The melancholy of the Bargello portrait, perhaps painted in this very year, was the outward token of the inward misery and weariness which preyed upon his soul, like that of which we read in *Ecclesiastes* and in *Hamlet*. He has to tell of his deliverance from that evil state. The *Commedia* is for him, as the *Pilgrim's Progress* was afterwards for Bunyan, the history of his conversion. He has also to fulfil the promise, made ten years before, with which the *Vita Nuova* ended, that he would make the name of Beatrice immortal.

<sup>2</sup> The "gloomy forest" (*Purg* xiv. 64), the "straight path" lost (*Purg* xxx. 125), was so natural a symbol of the state just described, that it is hardly necessary to look elsewhere for the sources of the imagery. *Prov* ii. 13-15, *2 Pet* ii. 15, may have floated in his mind, or he may have found the thought in the *Teoretico* of his master, Brunetto Latini (il. 75). In his own *Convito* (iv. 24) he speaks of life as a *selva erronea*. To him, as to others (the *Autobiography* of S. Mill and the *Confessions* of Augustine supply striking parallels, not to speak of St. Paul's recollections of a like state in *Rom* vii. 23, 24), that state was as "the body of this death," and even to remember it was terrible.

So bitter 'twas, death's self were little more ;  
 But that the good there found I may display,  
 I'll tell what else 'twas given me to explore.  
 How I there entered, can I not well say, 10  
 So sleep-oppress'd was I in that same hour  
 When from the true path thus I went astray  
 But when I reached a point 'bove which did tower  
 A mount, where to its end that valley drew,  
 Which pierced my heart with terror's torturing power, 15  
 I looked on high, and lo ! its slopes to view  
 Came clothed with brightness from that planet's ray  
 Which for all others ordereth path most true  
 Then for a while did peace the fear allay  
 That my heart's fountain vexed, nor did relent 20  
 All the sad night I passed in such dismay,  
 And e'en as one who, panting, worn, and spent,  
 From the deep sea escaping to the shore,  
 Turns to the perilous waves in wonderment,  
 So did my soul, that still fled evermore, 25  
 Turn back to gaze upon the scene around,  
 Which never living man had yet passed o'er  
 When my worn frame awhile had sought the ground,  
 Once more I started through the desert plain,  
 So that the firm foot still was lower found 30

<sup>9</sup> "What else" A & I gives, "what high things"

<sup>10</sup> Self knowledge had not yet come, as it came afterwards, through the reproof of Beatrice (*Purg.* xxx. 115-145), to point to the cause, and therefore to the remedy, of the evil. He was as one walking in a dream.

<sup>14</sup> The "mount," afterwards (l. 77) described as the "mount delectable" (we note the unconscious parallelism in Bunyan), can stand for nothing else than the ideal life of holiness, perhaps also the ideal Christian polity, such as we find in the *Mon.*, after which the poet was beginning to aspire. He saw its heights gleaming with the "rose of dawn." Even to contemplate that ideal as afar off brought with it some calm and comfort. The sun, in accordance with the Ptolemaic astronomy, is described as a "planet." Here, of course, it is the symbol of the Sun of Righteousness. God is the spiritual sun of the Universe (*Par.* xxv. 54, *Conv.* iii. 18), leading men (we note the sad pathos of the "others," as coming from the bewildered pilgrim) on their way (*Purg.* xiii. 16-21).

<sup>22</sup> The first simile in the *Comm.*, like all that follow it, is as far as possible from being a "poetical ornament." It is introduced because it describes a state which no other words could describe half as well. It reminds us in part of the "*stare mari magno*" of Lucretius (l. 1), but there the tranquillity is that of one who had not been struggling with the waves, who had not made shipwreck of his faith, because there was no faith to lose. Here the escape is that of one who has uttered his *De Profundis*. He has passed (the two images blend together) out of the valley of the shadow of death the abyss from which no "living man" (he speaks of the soul's life, not the body's) had ever been delivered, and looks back with the first consciousness that hope was possible, even in the midst of fears.

<sup>30</sup> Aspirations after the ideal are followed by efforts. He begins, after a short interval of repose, to climb the mountain of holiness.

And lo<sup>1</sup> just as the sloping side I gain,  
 A leopard supple, lithe, exceeding fleet,  
 Whose skin full many a dusky spot did stain,  
 Nor did she from before my face retreat,  
 Nay, hindered so my journey on the way, 35  
 That many a time I backward turned my feet.  
 The hour was that of earliest dawn of day;  
 And with each star the sun on high did ride,  
 Which with him was when Love's divinest sway  
 O'er the first forms of beauty did preside, 40  
 So that good ground for bright hopes met me here  
 From that fair creature with the spotted hide,  
 The hour of day and season sweet of year;  
 Yet o'er me, spite of this, did terror creep  
 From aspect of a lion drawing near. 45  
 He seemed as if upon me he would leap,  
 With head upraised and hunger fierce and wild,  
 So that a shudder through the air did sweep,  
 Then a she-wolf, with all ill greed defiled,  
 Laden with hungry leanness terrible, 50  
 That many nations of their peace beguiled,

<sup>12</sup> The three symbolic forms that obstruct the pilgrim's path are those of *Jer v 6*. The frequency with which Dante quotes that prophet (*P N c 29, Frat O M iii 116*) seems to indicate a certain attraction of affinity. In temperament, in genius, to some extent in their outward fortunes, the lives of the two men present a strange parallelism. After the manner of mediæval commentaries, starting from Jerome (*Comm in Jer v 6*), the three forms of animal life become types of moral evil—the leopard of the love of sensuous beauty, the lion of pride, the wolf of greed (so *Bocc*, without noticing others). So in the *Golden Legend* these are the three sins which S. Dominic and S. Francis were raised up to overcome. So Boethius (*B iii*), where, however, the swine takes the place of the leopard. Possibly, as a whole school of commentators (Foscolo, Rossetti, and others) have suggested, there may be an underlying political symbolism as well, and the three beasts may stand for Florence, France, and the Papal Curia respectively, as typical representatives of those vices. What Dante calls (*Ep to Can Grande*) the nature of his poems, "as manifold in meaning," makes a double interpretation probable, and it is perhaps in favour of this view that Jerome (*Comm in Jer v 6*), while accepting the moral allegory, suggests also that the lion is the symbol of the Babylonian monarchy, the wolf of the Medo-Persian, and the leopard of that of Alexander the Great, the spots of the leopard's skin representing the mingled population of the Macedonian monarchy, as to the interpreters above-named they represent the factions that destroyed the peace of Florence.

<sup>13</sup> See note on l. 1.

<sup>14</sup> The leopard did not alarm the wanderer. The life of sensual enjoyment, the stir of the rejoicing city, if we admit the reference to Florence, blended with the brightness of spring, perhaps with the memories of Holy Week and Easter (*Bocc*), and gave rise at first to hope. But the hope was transitory. The leopard hindered the pilgrim from climbing the mountain. He sought to resist the temptation by enrolling himself among the followers of S. Francis of Assisi, probably among the Tertiaries (*C xvi 106*), but he needed a stronger impulse than any ascetic rules could give him.

<sup>15</sup> The lion and the wolf (comp *Purg xx 10*), unlike the leopard, are simply deterrent. Pride and avarice, embodied chiefly in the acts of the powers, France and Rome, that thwart his political aspirations, caused fear, and not hope. The soul gave up the struggle and fell back into the darkness from which it seemed to have escaped.



And thereupon such sorrow on me fell,  
 With dread that came from that ill-boding sight,  
 That I lost hope to climb that mountain well.  
 And e'en as one who gains with great delight, 53  
 When the time comes that makes him lose his prey,  
 Mourns in each thought, oppress'd with sore despight,  
 So that fierce beast, who ne'er at rest did stay,  
 Now meeting me, by slow degrees and sure,  
 Thrust me back there where silent is the day. 60  
 And as I fell back to that clime obscure,  
 Before mine eyes there seemed a form to glide,  
 Whose voice, through silence long, seemed hoarse and poor,  
 And when I saw him in that desert wide,  
 "Have pity on me" I to him did cry, 65  
 "Whether in thee or man or shade is spied."  
 And he made answer "Man no more am I  
 Man I was once, my parents Lombards were,  
 And both to Mantua traced their ancestry,  
*Sub Julio* was I born, though late the year, 70  
 And lived at Rome beneath Augustus good,  
 While false and lying Gods men worshipp'd their  
 A poet I, and sang the righteous mood  
 Of great Anchises' son, who came from Troy,  
 When haughty Ilion was by fire subdued 75  
 But thou, why turn'st thou back to such annoy?  
 Why climb'st thou not yon mount delectable,  
 Which is the source and spring of every joy?"

60 Comp. Milton, *S. A.* 86 — "The sun to me is dark,  
 And silent is the moon."

68 Help comes from an unexpected quarter. What Plato had been to Justin and Augustine, Virgil was to Dante—a "schoolmaster leading him to Christ." In *Purg.* xii. 3, he applies to him the very term, "pædagogus," of *Gal.* iii. 24. I cannot doubt that we have the record of an actual experience. Virgil was for him more than a *Deus ex machina*, the representative of human, as distinguished from divine wisdom. He had studied him in his youth, had formed his style on his had drunk in his thoughts as to the greatness of the part assigned to Rome in the divine drama of history. In the vision of Hades in *U. vi.* of the *Æneid* he found, it need hardly be said, more than in any mediæval legends, visions of Albano, or S. Patrick's Purgatory, the archetype of the *Commedia*. The "long silence" and the "hoarse voice" may symbolize either the general neglect of the poet's wisdom, or Dante's own temporary disregard of what might have saved him from his fall. To him, at first, the oracles of human wisdom seemed dim and dark. Comp. Milton, *P. L.* vii. 25 —

"With mortal voice unchanged,  
 To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days"

70 *Sub Julio* Virgil, *b. a. c.* 70, *d. a. c.* 19. Julius Cæsar, *b. a. c.* 100, *d. a. c.* 44. Augustus, *b. a. c.* 63, *d. a. c.* 14. Virgil had, therefore, been for twenty-six years a contemporary of Julius. It is worth noting that Dante had been taught by his master, Lanni, to think of Julius as the first Emperor (*Par.* i. 38)

"What 'art thou Virgil, thou that springing well  
 Which pours of clear full eloquence the tide?" 80  
 I answered him with looks that reverence tell.  
 "O, of all other bards the light and pride,  
 Let the long study and the love avail  
 Which I to that thy volume have applied.  
 Thou art my Master, Guide that dost not fail, 85  
 And thou alone art he from whom I drew  
 The goodly style whence comes of praise full tale  
 Thou see'st the beast that back my footsteps threw,  
 Give me thine aid against her, famous seer,  
 For she with fear doth vein and pulse imbue" 90  
 "'Tis meet thy steps to other course should veer,"  
 Ho answered, when he saw me weeping sore,  
 "If thou wilt 'scape this region waste and drear,  
 For that fell beast, whose spite thou wailest o'er,  
 Lets no man onward pass along her way, 95  
 But so doth hinder that he lives no more,  
 And is of mood so evil, fierco to slay,  
 That never doth she sate her hunger dread,  
 But, when full-gorged, still hungors most for prey.  
 Many the creatures are that with her wed, 100  
 And will be more until the Greyhound come  
 Who with sharp agony shall smite her dead.

<sup>87</sup> Dante speaks as one already (in A.D. 1300) held in repute as a writer, probably referring to the *Vita Nuova*, and the *Sonnets* and *Canzoni*, which belong to the earlier labours of his life, possibly to the *De Mon* (Witte), or to Latin poems which have not come down to us, but in which the eclogues that passed between him and Joannes de Virgilio show him to have been an expert. The fact, however, that in *Canz.* 4 he speaks of his own *sonno stile* is proof that he ascribed his mastery over Italian to the study of Virgil's *Laure*. The "fell beast" that had driven the poet back from the "delectable mountain" was the greed of gain, which he found dominant everywhere, attacking even him, pitiless and insatiable (comp. *Mon.* i. 16, *Conv.* iv. 12).

<sup>100</sup> The "greyhound" is the idealised deliverer of Italy. In the *De Mon.* l. 1, Dante dwells on the repression of covetousness as the great work of the true Emperor. Here, however (the passage being probably inserted after the death of Henry VII. in A.D. 1313), the ideal is localised by the two Feltri, the one in Friuli the other (Montefeltro) in Romagna, to the territory ruled by Can Grande della Scala of Verona, to whom, as viceroy of the Empire, the worshipper of the ideal transferred his hopes after Henry's death. In *Par.* xvi. 82-90 he describes his protector in nearly the same terms as those which are here used, "caring not for silver," making the rich poor and the poor rich. By some commentators (Troya) the "greyhound" has been identified (less probably) with the Marquis Ugucione della Fagguola, a Ghibelline leader, prominent in the movement under Henry VII., to whom the *Inferno* is said to have been dedicated, and for whom two boundaries, Macerata Feltria and Sanleo Feltrio, have been found. The name of Can Grande, it may be noted, probably suggested the symbol of the "greyhound." In the "low Italy" (l. 106) we have an echo of the *humilis Italia* of *En.* iii. 522. For the names that follow, see *En.* v. 320-360, xi. 831. xii. 930-952. The width of the work which the greyhound is to accomplish points clearly to a widespread moral evil rather than to the Papal Curia, even if we were to suppose that Dante contem-

## 6 PROGRAMME OF THE PILGRIM'S JOURNEY. [HELL, c. 1.]

He shall not crave broad lands or pelf at home,  
 But wisdom, virtue, charity shall love,  
 And 'twixt two Feltros shall his subjects roam 105  
 Of low Italia shall he saviour prove,  
 For which of old the maid Camilla died,  
 Nisus, Euryalus, and Turnus strove.  
 He through each town shall chase her far and wide,  
 Until he drive her back to deepest Hell, 110  
 From whence at Envy's primal nest she hied.  
 Wherefore for thee I think and judge 'tis well  
 That thou should'st follow, I thy leader be,  
 And guide thee hence to that eternal cell,  
 Where thou shalt hear sharp wails of misery, 115  
 Shalt see the ancient spirits in their pain,  
 For which, as being the second death, men cry  
 Those thou shalt see who, in the hope to gain,  
 When the hour comes, the blest ones' happier chime,  
 Can bear the torturing fire nor yet complain 120  
 To these would'st thou with eager footsteps climb,  
 A soul shall guide thee worthier far than I  
 With her I'll leave thee when to part 'tis time

plated Hell as at once the origin and the doom of that Curia. *Bocc.* (i. 61, 114) curiously enough writes as if no one had ever taken "*Feltro*" as the name of a place. With him it is simply a common noun, the "coarse cloth" of the garments of the poor, and he wanders in *omnia alia* of conjectural interpretations, one identifying the deliverer with the Christ born in the stable of Bethlehem. So Guido Pisano (*A.D.* 1333) asserts that in Spanish "*feltro*" means "arm-pit," and that the words point primarily to the "honest and good heart" as lying between the armpits, and *anagoge*, to Christ and the second advent. Such is the value of primitive tradition in the interpretation of a poet. The name *Casa* had taken the place of his original Christian name, Francesco (*Heg.* 295) as embodying a dream in which his mother, before his birth, had had a vision of his future greatness. Possibly the prominence given by the travels of Marco Polo to the character of Kublai, the great Khan (*Ca'an Grande*) of Tartary, as an almost ideal king, may have affected Dante's language. *Ca'u Grande* became a *nomen et omen* in a new sense (*Yule* i. 132, 139).

117 The "second death" is often taken as if it were equivalent to the annihilation for which the damned are supposed to long, and to long in vain. As used, however, in *Rev.* xx. 14, xvi. 8, the phrase has precisely the opposite meaning, and stands for the ultimate doom, and Dante was too good a theologian to use it in any other sense. His use of the term in his letter to the Florentines (*Heg.* 234. *Frat. O. M.* in 450) is absolutely decisive on this point. *Rev.* ix. 6 seems at first to support the traditional view, but there the "second death" is not named. On the whole, it seems best to take the word "cry" as simply meaning "bemoan," and as referring to the present or future sufferings of the damned (so Boccaccio). On the other hand, a striking coincidence is found in the *Book of Adam*, among the apocrypha of the so-called Christians of St. John at Bayona, where it is written of the damned, "They call on the second death with loud cries, and the second death is deaf to their prayers" (*Migne Dict. des Apoc.* i. 132).

118 As in C. iii. 9, it is the absence or the presence of hope that makes all the difference between Hell and Purgatory. The fiercest pains are endurable, may even be welcomed, if they develop the capacity for blessedness.

120 The "worthier soul," as the sequel shows, is Beatrice, glorified and transfigured, so as to be the representative of divine, as Virgil was of human, wisdom.

For that great Emperor who reigns on high,  
 Because I lived a rebel to His will, 125  
 Wills that through me none come His city nigh  
 Through all the world He rules, yet there reigns still,  
 There is His city, there His lofty throne.  
 Thrice blest whom He doth choose those courts to fill !"  
 Then spake I, " By the God thou did'st not own, 130  
 O Poet, I of thee a boon desire,  
 That I may 'scape this woe, or worse unknown,  
 That whither thou hast said thou lead me higher,  
 So that St. Peter's gate in sight I find,  
 And those thou tell'st of in their torments dire " 135  
 Then he moved onward and I trod behind

## CANTO II.

*The Pilgrim's Doubts—The Three Blessed Ladies in Paradise—  
 The Journey Resumed.*

THE day was closing, and the dusk-brown air  
 Set free from toil all forms of life that dwell  
 On earth and all alone did I prepare  
 To bear the brunt of all the conflict fell,  
 As of the way so also of the woe, 5  
 Which now my mind, that errs not, will retell  
 Ye Muses, help, Thought soaring from below,  
 And Memory, writing all mine eyes did see,  
 So shall thy greatness yet more nobly show

124 Readers of the *De Mon* will appreciate the significance of the use of the word "Emperor" rather than "King," as representing the sovereignty of God. The earthly Emperor was the type of the heavenly. Compare the use of the same word of the Lord of Hell (C. xxxiv. 28).

124 "St. Peter's gate." The entrance, not of Paradise, but Purgatory. Comp. *Purg.* vi. 127, xxi. 54.

1-3 An echo of *Æn.* iv. 529-538. The pilgrim, in that dusk of eve, enters, he alone of all that live (Virgil, of course, belongs to another order), on his marvellous journey. The sense of solitariness in his aspirations reminds us of the words said to have been spoken by him when it was proposed that he should go on an embassy to Rome: "If I stay, who is to go? If I go, who is to stay?"

Then I began : " O Poet guiding me, 10  
     Test well my courage, see if it avail,  
     Ere to that high task I am sent by thee.  
 The sire of Silvius, so thou tell'st the tale,  
     Yet subject to decay, did reach the clime  
     Immortal, nor did sense corporeal fail. 15  
 If, therefore, the great Foe of every crime  
     Was thus benign to him, as knowing well  
     The who, the what,—high end in far-off time,  
 Not unmeet seems it, where wise reasonings dwell,  
     For he of our dear Rome and its great might 20  
     Was chosen sire in Heaven empyreal ,  
 But this and that, to speak truth definite,  
     Were fixed and stablished for the Holy See  
     Where the great Peter's Vicar sits of right ,  
 He, in that journey, where he won from thee 25  
     His glory, heard of things from whence did flow  
     The Papal mantle and his Victory  
 There later did the Chosen Vessel go  
     To bring back comfort for that one true creed  
     Which opens to us salvation from our woe 30  
 But why should I go ? Who will this concede ?  
     I nor Æneas am, nor yet am Paul ,  
     Worthy of that nor I myself indeed,  
 Nor others deem me Wherefore, to this call  
     If now I yield, I fear me lest it be 35  
     A journey vain. Wiso art thou , more than all

<sup>11</sup> Misgivings, self distrust, fear, come to Dante, as they have come to other prophets—to Moses (*Exod* iv. 10), to Isaiah (*Isa* vi. 5), to Jeremiah (*Jer* i. 6). The "sire of Silvius" (= Æneas), St. Paul as the "chosen vessel," these had a work to do which justified the withdrawing of the veil of the Unseen. Had he, the citizen of Florence, anything like a similar vocation? 2 *Cer* xii. 4, however, speaks only of St. Paul's vision of Paradise and the third heaven. Was Dante thinking of the *Vision of St. Paul*, a French poem of the 13th century, of the type of the *Vision of Fra Albengo*, which gives prominence to the sufferings of the lost? (*Osian* p. 343.)

<sup>31</sup> The "heaven empyreal" is described in *Conv* n. 4 as a region of light and flame, the calm peaceful abode of God and the spirits of the blessed. Comp. *Cic Somn Scip* c. 4, and *Par* xxx. 58.

<sup>33</sup> The sensitiveness of the poet mingles with the self knowledge of the man. He has winced under the criticism which treated him as only a writer of sonnets and the like, and sneered at his claim to take his place among the great poets of mankind, to write of his beloved one what had never yet been written by man or woman (*P N* c. 43). So in the *Conv* (i. 3) he says, not without a touch of bitterness, that he "has seemed vile in the eyes of many" on account of his poverty, that "every work of his was less prized, both what had been, and what was to be wrought." In *C* iv. 100-108, xxiv. 94-99, we trace the same self-consciousness. He, as a reader of the *Ethics*, had probably learned that the man who is great of soul is one who counts himself worthy, being worthy, of great things (Arist. *Eth Nic* iv. 3).

I speak thou knowest." And behold, as he  
 Who wills and wills not, and by new thoughts tost,  
 Changes his plan, and all his projects flee,  
 So stood I on that dusky hillside lost, 40  
 For musing still, the work all ran to waste,  
 That at the outset sped its uttermost.  
 "If I have well thy words' true meaning traced,"  
 Then answered me that noble Poet's shade,  
 "Thy soul is now with coward fear disgraced, 45  
 Which often hath man's spirit overweighed,  
 So that it turns him from his high emprise,  
 As some false vision makes a beast afraid.  
 That thou from out this fear of thine may'st rise,  
 I why I came and what I heard will say. 50  
 When first I looked on thee with pitying eyes,  
 I was among the souls that hang midway,  
 And lo! a Lady called me, blest and fair,  
 So that I asked wherein I might obey  
 Bright were her eyes beyond the star's compare, 55  
 And she began in accents soft and kind,  
 With voice angelic, such as they speak there.  
 'O Mantuan spirit, thou of courteous mind,  
 Whose fame doth still in yonder world endure,  
 And while the world lasts still its place shall find, 60  
 My friend, not Fortune's, on the slope obscure  
 And desolate is so entangled there,  
 That he through dread turns back from progress sure,

<sup>40</sup> The evil to be cured is the self-distrust which draws back from a high vocation. The remedy is found in the consciousness of an election. Others, whom he worships with an adoring love, are watching over him, praying for him. He may have critics and enemies, but "those that are with him are more than they that are against him" (*2 Kings* vi 16).

<sup>45</sup> The state of the souls that "hung midway" is described more fully in C. iv. It is characteristic of Dante's tendency to the "larger hope" (for which see again *Par.* xix 70) that though his theology formally excluded these from the beatific vision for which they perpetually yearned, he yet thinks of them as not shut out from the communion of saints, and capable of higher ministries of service, not without its reward of praise, even than those of angels.

<sup>46</sup> The star is the Sun (*Conv.* iii 5). Comp. *Wind* vii 29.

<sup>47</sup> "Such as they speak there." Lat. "in her own language." The words are commonly assumed to mean the Italian of Florence, but the mention of the "angelic voice" justifies the paraphrase. She spoke to Virgil in the dialect of heaven.

<sup>48</sup> "Courteous." Dante's frequent use of the epithet is eminently suggestive as to his own ideal of the manner of a noble nature. It is used again of Virgil (*I.* 134, iii 121), of the Angel of Purgatory (*Purg.* ix 92), of Oderisi (*Purg.* xi 85), of Thomas Aquinas (*Par.* xii 111).

<sup>49</sup> The words of Beatrice must be read in combination with those of *Purg.* xxx 103-145. He who had loved her had proved faithless, had fallen from the ideal with which she had

And much I fear lest he already bear  
     A doom that makes my succour all too late, 65  
     From that which I in Heaven of him did hear  
 Now rouse thyself, and, with thy speech ornate,  
     And with what skill to free him thou may'st know,  
     Help him, nor leave me thus disconsolate  
 I Beatrice am who bid thee go; 70  
     I come from clime which to regain I yearn  
     Love moved me, and from love my speech doth flow  
 When to my Lord's high presence I return,  
     By me thy praise shall oftentimes be shown;<sup>66</sup>  
     Then she was silent I began in turn 75  
 'O Lady of great virtue, thou alone  
     Dost raise mankind to pass the furthest height  
     Of that bright heaven by lesser circles known,  
 So much doth thy behest my soul delight,  
     E'en service done, repute of sloth would gain, 80  
     Thou need'st not more thy purpose bring to light,  
 But tell the cause why thou dost not refrain  
     From passing downward to this centre drear  
     From that wide realm thou longest to regain'<sup>67</sup>  
 'Of what thou seek'st so eagerly to hear,' 85  
     She answered me, 'I briefly now will tell  
     Why I to enter here have felt no fear  
 Of those things only fear in us should dwell  
     Which have the power to work another's woe,  
     Of others none, they are not terrible 90

inspired him, but he is still her friend, and the fact that he is not Fortune's friend also gives him a claim on her compassion. To exclude this intensely personal feeling and to see in Beatrice only part of the "machinery" of an epic, the allegorical representative of Theology, is to confess, or at least to prove, oneself incapable of entering into Dante's mind and thinking as he thought.

<sup>66</sup> In Dante's theology the spirits of the lost know what those of the lost do not know, (C x 97-108), the things that are passing on the earth, seeing them, as it were, in the mirror of the Divine Omniscience. They are touched with sorrow for those whom they have left below, and are capable of consolation. They can leave Paradise for a while on ministries of mercy, and enter into the abode of the lost without suffering hurt (l 92). They can bring some increase of comfort even to the souls that are at rest though not in bliss, by reporting to the Supreme King the faithfulness of their service (l 47).

<sup>67</sup> So in *I. N. C.* 30, Beatrice had been described as "the queen of virtue." The "heaven by lesser circles known" is that of the moon (*Par.* ii 30). Mankind excels all else that is in that "sphere beneath the moon, because there is in its humanity the "promise and potency" of a perfection and a beauty like that of the glorified Beatrice (comp. *Purg.* xxx 115, and the *Canzone* of *Conv.* ii). The ideal transfiguration of Beatrice which we find throughout the *Comm.* finds suggestive parallels (1) in Auguste Comte's reverence of Clotilde de Vaux as the perfect type of the Humanity which was the only object of his worship, and (2), on a lower level, in the term which Simon Magus is said to have applied to his mistress Helena as the "first great thought" of God (*Euseb. H. E.* ii 13).

I by God's bounty have been fashioned so  
 That your great misery leaves me sound and whole,  
 Nor touches me yon fiery furnace' glow.  
 A gentle Lady dwells in heaven whose soul  
 So feels that hindrance whither thee I send, 85  
 That judgment stern on high owns her control.  
 She Lucia called, and bade her to attend,  
 And said, "Thy faithful one is now in need  
 Of thee, and I to thee his cause commend."  
 And Lucia, foe of each un pitying deed, 100  
 Hastened, and thither came where with me stays  
 Rachel, of whom in story old we read,  
 And said "O Beatrice, God's true praise,  
 Why help'st thou not the man that loves thee so,  
 That he for thy sake left the vile herd's ways? 105  
 Dost thou not hear his piteous plaint of woe?  
 Dost thou not see the death he has to face,  
 Where floods that shame the stormiest sea's boast flow?"

<sup>94</sup> The "gentle lady" is none other than the Blessed Virgin, Our Lady of Pity, the symbol of prevenient grace (*Par* xxxiii 16), who here, as in *Par* xxxii 8, 9 is represented as in company with Beatrice (symbol of Divine Wisdom), and with Rachel (symbol, as in *Purg* xxvii 104, of Divine Contemplation), the very "Queen of Heaven." She too had looked with pity on the wanderer (*Weg* 469). In the *V N* (C. 29) Beatrice is said to have been made a sharer, by her death, in the glory of the blessed Queen of Heaven.

<sup>95</sup> The choice of Lucia may be connected, without much risk of error, with Dante's personal history. The martyr-saint of Syracuse, who in the Diocletian persecution had torn out her eyes that her beauty might not minister to man's lust, was much honoured in Florence, and two churches, still standing, were dedicated to her. The story of her death had made her the patron saint of all who suffered from diseases of the eye, and Dante (*V N* C. 40 *Conv* in 9) was, at one time threatened with blindness. *Ex voto* offerings of silver eyes are still seen in her churches. It was natural that he, after the manner of his time, should look to her as having healed him, as natural as that the outward should become the symbol of an inward healing, all the more so when her very name brought with it the promise of illumination. Another S. Lucia of the convent of S. Clara at Florence, and of the Ubaldini family, who lived in the 13th century, has been suggested (*Scart*) as the one that Dante may have had in view. As both churches are dedicated to Lucia of Syracuse, I incline to the earlier of the two. Witt, however (*D F* ii 30), finds that the later Lucia's festival in the calendar of Florence was May 30th, and conjectures that this may have been Dante's birthday (May was certainly the month of his birth, *C* xv 55 *Par* xxii 112), and that she was therefore chosen by him as his patroness saint. It is curious that in *Conv* iii 5 Maria and Lucia appear as the names of two imaginary cities chosen to illustrate the theory of the spherical form of the earth. It would be no strange thing in hagiology for the attributes of the earlier to have been transferred to the later saint. Lucia appears again in *Purg* ix 55, *Par* xxxii 137.

<sup>108</sup> The name by which Lucia addresses Beatrice is as an echo of the *V N* c. 26. Men exclaimed, as they saw in her the ideal of humanity, "Blessed be the Lord, who knoweth to work so wondrously." Line 105 epitomises the whole story of the *V N*. It was through his love for Beatrice that the poet's life became unlike that of others, with different aims and with a soul that dwelt apart.

<sup>109</sup> What had been a similitude in *C* i 22 is presented more objectively. The poet had been in the great depths and the floods had gone over him. Prosaic commentators have, after their manner, identified the "flood" with Acheron, which is not reached till *C* iii 78.



Ne'er in the world went men at such swift pace  
 Their good to gain, or from their loss retreat, 110  
 As I, when I had heard such words of grace,  
 Did take the downward path from my blest seat,  
 In thy fair speech confiding, which brings praise  
 To thee and those who listen at thy feet.  
 And when her tale she ended, then her gaze 115  
 She turned, her bright eyes wet with many a tear,  
 And so she made me come without delays  
 And I, as she desired me, sought thee here;  
 I made thee from before that fierce beast rise,  
 Which stopped quick climbing up yon mountain fair 120  
 What ails thee then? why, why halt, lingering-wise?  
 Why doth such baseness in thine heart find place?  
 Why hast thou not bold zeal for high emprise,  
 Since three such ladies, blest of God's dear grace,  
 Care for thee in that heavenly company, 125  
 And in my speech such promise thou may'st trace?"  
 E'en as the flowers, beneath the night's cold sky  
 Bent down and closed, when sunrise makes them white,  
 With open blossoms lift their stalks on high,  
 So did I then with my half-vanished might, 130  
 And such good courage rose within my heart  
 That I began, as freed from all affright.  
 "O gracious she who did the helper's part,  
 And courteous thou who did'st so soon obey  
 The words of truth she did to thee impart 135  
 Thou to my heart such yearning dost convey,  
 With those thy words, to journey on again,  
 That I once more by my first purpose stay.

119 The fierce beast is the wolf, not the leopard, of C I. It may be worth while noting, as we part from the symbolism, that the *lonea* of the original has been variously rendered as "leopard," "panther," "ounce," or "lynx."

127 The simile calls for notice—(1) as the first example of the exquisite vividness and tenderness with which Dante looked on the phenomena of nature, (2) as an example of the *ne plus ultra* of fantastic exposition. The flowers, according to Rossetti (*Spir. Ant. Pap.* p. 392) become white, and are therefore a parable of the poet's conversion from the Guelphism of the Neri of Florence to the Ghibellinism of the later Bianchi. Dean Church's language is hardly too strong when he says of this system of interpretation that it solves the enigma of Dante's works by imagining for him "a character in which it is hard to say which predominates, the pedant, the mountebank, or the infidel" (*Dante*, p. 84).

On then ; one only will is in us twain ;  
 Thou Leader art, thou Lord, and thou my Guide." 140  
 So spake I ; and when he moved on, again  
 I too that pathway wild and dreary tried.

### CANTO III.

*The Gate of Hell—The Company of the Neutrals—Charon and his Passengers.*

"THROUGH me men pass to city of great woe ;  
 Through me men pass to endless misery ;  
 Through me men pass where all the lost ones go.  
 Justice it was that moved my Maker high,  
 The Power of God it was that fashioned me, 5  
 Wisdom supreme and primal Charity.  
 Before me nothing was of things that be,  
 Save the eterne, and I eterne endure :  
 Ye that pass in, all hope abandon ye "  
 These words I saw, in characters obscure, 10  
 Enwritten o'er the summit of a gate.  
 "Master, their cruel drift is but too sure,"  
 I said ; he skilled my thoughts to penetrate .  
 "Here it is meet thou leave all doubt behind ,  
 'Tis meet that thou all baseness extirpate. 15

139 In his new born courage the pilgrim follows his leader without reserve, and the guidance continues till, in *Purg.* xxx 55, Beatrice takes the place of Virgil

1-9 The inscription on the gate of Hell embodies the root principle of Dante's eschatology, based as that was on the teaching of Aquinas. Hell is the "city" of the lost (the range of the word is wider than that of the "city of Dis" in *C. viii* 68, which is but a part of Hell), as Heaven, the New Jerusalem, is the city of the great King (*C. i* 128). The misery of the lost is eternal in the sense of "endless." Its existence is not only consistent with, but is conditioned by, the Divine love, which, without it, would be transformed to a weak and aimless indifference to evil. In its formation the three Persons of the Trinity, each with His characteristic attribute, the Omnipotence of the Father, the Wisdom of the Son, the Love of the Eternal Spirit, had co-operated. The time of its creation was fixed as after that of the rebel angels, possibly after their fall (comp. *Matt.* xxv 41), who are classified as among the "things eternal" in the sense of everlasting. Its last and most terrible feature is that it excludes hope. Those last words seem to have perplexed and alarmed the pilgrim. Could he enter through that gate and yet retain his hope of better things? See *C. viii* 126 for a further history of the gate. Commentators have discussed the question where the gate was supposed to stand, some arguing for the cave near Avernus, as in *Æn.* vi, some for the Valley of Jehoshaphat, as being the Antipodes of the Mount of Purgatory. The debate seems a somewhat profitless one. Dante, at all events, did not care to furnish data for its decision.

15 The answer of his guide removes the poet's doubt. His faith in the three heavenly ladies, in God Himself, ought to have taught him that no powers of the gates of Hell should prevail against one who was under such protection.

We to the place have come where thou wilt find,  
 E'en as I said, the people sorrow-fraught,  
 Those who have lost the Good supreme of mind."  
 Then me, his hand firm clasped in mine, he brought,  
 With joyful face that-gave me comfort great, 20  
 Within the range of things in secret wrought  
 There sighs and tears and groans disconsolate  
 So sounded through the starless firmament,  
 That at the outset I wept sore thereat.  
 Speech many-tongued and cries of dire lament, 25  
 Words full of wrath and accents of despair,  
 Deep voices hoarse and hands where woe found vent,—  
 These made a tumult whirling through the air,  
 For evermore, in timeless gloom the same,  
 As whirls the sand storm-driven here and there 30  
 And I, upon whose brain strange wildness came,  
 Said, "Master, what is this that now I hear,  
 And who that race whom torment so doth tame?"  
 And he to me "This wretched doom they bear,  
 The sorrow-smitten souls of those whose name 35  
 Nor foul reproach nor glorious praise did share  
 Mingled are they with those of evil fame,  
 The angels who nor rebels were, nor true  
 To God, but dwelt in isolated shame

<sup>18</sup> The "supreme good of mind" is the intuition of God as the Truth that alone can satisfy its cravings (comp. *Conv.* i. 2, ii. 14). That was, as it were, the first axiom of theology, as in *John* xvii. 3, finding expression in all the great masters of that science, in Origen, and Clement of Alexandria, in Augustine and Aquinas. Comp. *Arist. de An.* c. 3.

<sup>19</sup> The "clasped hand" tells of an experience which had felt the power of that sacrament of human help. One wonders that no master of spiritual therapeutics has written at least an essay on the evangelising power of the hand as distinguished from the voice. In this case it brought, as by a mesmeric influence, to the perplexed mind of the pilgrim something of the serene joy with which his more experienced guide had learnt to look even on the most terrible manifestations of the Divine righteousness. Human pity, however, was not extinct, and "at first he wept." At the outset, as throughout, Virgil is as it were, the Mentor, the higher self of the poet, no longer the classical poet of the age of Augustus, but Christianised, medievalised, scholasticised, interested in the questions and politics of Italy in the 13th century (*Par.* i. 440).

<sup>20</sup> Foremost and most numerous among the lost, Dante, with all the thoroughness of a strong nature, places those who had been content to remain neutral in the great contest between good and evil. Among these he may have recognised chiefly, it may be, many with whom he had been associated at Florence,—the "White" Guelphs, the party headed by Vieri dei Cerchi, the *nouveaux riches* of the city, who lacked the civil strength of the "Black" Guelphs that followed Corso Donati, and were content to take life easily and to let slip opportunities for good (*Dino*, 45 *Church*, 45). There is, of course, no real contrast between this feeling and Dante's boast that he attached himself to neither of the two contending factions of his time, but formed a party by himself (*Par.* xvii. 69). There the question is between two forms of evil, here between evil and good, and therefore the saying, "He that is not with us is against us" (*Matt.* xii. 30), holds good in its fulness.

<sup>21</sup> *Lub.* refers vaguely to Clement of Alexandria as the authority for these neutral angels.

Heaven, fearing loss of beauty, spurned that crew ; 40  
 Nor were they harboured in the depths of Hell,  
 Lest to the damned some glory might accrue."  
 And I : "O Master, what doom terrible  
 Makes them lament with such a bitter cry ?"  
 And he : "Full briefly I the cause will tell. 45  
 No hope have these that they shall ever die,  
 And this blind life of theirs so base is shown,  
 All other doom they view with envious eye  
 Their fame the world above leaves all unknown ;  
 Mercy and Justice look on them with scorn 50  
 Talk not of them ; one glance, and then pass on."  
 And as I looked I saw a standard borne,  
 Which whirling moved with such a rapid flight,  
 It seemed to me all thought of rest to spurn ,  
 And in its rear a long train came in sight, 55  
 Of people, so that scarce I held it true  
 Death had undone such legions infinite  
 And when among the crowd some forms I knew,  
 I looked, and lo ! I saw his spectre there  
 Who basely from his calling high withdrew. 60

who waited to see the issue of the conflict, but I have not succeeded in finding the passage Aquinas makes no mention of them.

<sup>43</sup> I have taken *alcuna* in its more ordinary sense, which seems to give an adequate meaning. The neutrals were not received into Hell, for those that were there would have had the glory of exulting in the doom of those whose weakness had brought them to the same wretchedness as their own more active evil (see C. xii. 9). The other rendering, in which *alcuna* is taken as = 'none,'—"For glory none the damned would have from them,"—seems to imply that the damned could choose their company.

<sup>46</sup> It is characteristic that Dante sees in the total loss of fame in the world which the neutrals have left a heavier doom than the torments suffered by those whose name is still remembered, whether for good or evil, in that world. The "last infirmity of noble mind" exists even in the damned. Comp. C. xiii. 77, xv. 120, and throughout the *Inferno*.

<sup>44</sup> The punishment is clearly symbolic. The sin of the coward neutrals was that they had followed public opinion, the cries and banners of the majority. Now they are condemned to follow such a banner through all the vicissitudes of its ever-changing vacillations. That is the righteous doom of the *aura popularis captator*.

<sup>45</sup> In accordance with the law implied in l. 49, the man who made *il gran rifiuto* is not even named, and hence there is a wide field for conjecture. Esau, who sold his birthright (*Gen.* xii. 16), Diocletian, the young ruler who had great possessions (*Matt.* xix. 22), Vieri, or Torrigiano, dei Cerchi (see above on l. 34, and *Faust.* i. 177), who at some political crisis deserted his party, have been suggested by different commentators. On the whole, however, the earliest tradition, given by Boccaccio (*Comun. in loc.*), is probably the truest. Piero da Morrone, who had led a hermit's life in the mountain of that name in the Abruzzi, was elected Pope at Perugia in 1294, and took the name of Celestine V., was persuaded by Cardinal Benedetto Gaetani that it was against his soul's health to retain the pomp and power of the Papacy, and solemnly resigned his office, Gaetani being chosen as his successor as Boniface VIII. By some the act was looked on as an act of supreme saintliness, and under John XXII (1310-15) Celestine was canonised and his praises were celebrated by Petrarch (*De Vit. Solit.*). It was not strange, however, that Dante, writing prior to the canonisation, and tracing all his own misfortunes and those of his country to the evil influence of Boniface, should take a different view, and see in that withdrawal from a high calling and election the act of a nature

Forthwith I understood and saw full clear,  
 These were the souls of all the cantiff host  
 Whom neither God nor yet His foes could bear.  
 These wretched slaves, who ne'er true life could boast,  
 Were naked all, and, in full evil case, 65  
 By gnats and wasps were stung that filled that coast;  
 And streams of blood down-trickled on each face,  
 And, mingled with their tears, beneath their feet,  
 Were licked by worms that wriggled foul and base  
 And when I further looked on that drear seat, 70  
 On a great river's bank a troop I saw,  
 Wherefore I said, "O Master, I entreat  
 That I may know who these are, what the law  
 Which makes them seem so eager to pass o'er,  
 As through the dim light they my notice draw." 75  
 And he to me: "Of this thou shalt know more,  
 When we our footsteps on the pathway set  
 That runs by Acheron's melancholy shore"  
 And then, with eyes where shame and awe were met,  
 For fear lest he my words displeased should mark, 80  
 Till we the river reached I spake not yet.  
 And then behold! toward us came a bark,  
 Bearing an old man, white with hoary age,  
 And crying, "Woe to you, ye spirits dark,  
 Hope never ye to see Heaven's heritage: 85  
 I come to take you to the other coast,  
 Eternal gloom, and heat, and winter's rage

weak and therefore miserable, caring more for ease and quiet than for duty. See Milman's *Lat Chris* vi 456-465, Gower, *Conf Am* ii *Serran* as a good Franciscan, argues vehemently against the Celestine theory, and refers the *grun refinto* to *Evau Gnt Pis*, and *Castelv* agree in referring the passage to Celestine, but urge on Dante's behalf that he wrote before the Church had given her judgment on his abdication.

<sup>65</sup> The penalty is again appropriate. Those who had never clothed themselves with righteousness were left naked. Those who had shrunk from the stinging reproaches of men were now exposed defenceless to the stings of gnats and wasps. The "tears" of their unavailing remorse expose them to yet further shame. Is not this in its turn a parable of the doom that falls on the trimmers and the waverers even on earth?

<sup>71</sup> The "great river" is Acheron, the stream of lamentations. The "law" which leads the souls thither is set forth in l. 121-127.

<sup>83</sup> The picture of the grim ferryman of Hell is, as it were, a *replica* of that in *En* vi 299-301. Here, as elsewhere, Christian and classical mythology were mingled without scruple. The introduction of Charon in Michael Angelo's Last Judgment in the Sistine Chapel is probably not an unconscious parallelism, but a direct reproduction of the thought of Dante. That artist was a devout student of Dante, wrote sonnets in his honour, and is said to have illustrated the whole of the *Comm* in sketches that were lost at sea. See *D Gessell* ii 221-225.

And thou, who standest there, thou living ghost,  
 Withdraw thyself from these who come as dead."  
 But when he saw I did not leave that host, 90  
 "By other ways, by other ports," he said,  
 "Thou wilt that region reach, not here: received  
 In lighter bark than mine thou shalt be led."  
 Then spake my Leader: "Charon, be not grieved,  
 This is there willed where Will and Power are one, 95  
 Nor question what should be at once believed."  
 Then quiet were those cheeks, with beard o'ergrown,  
 Of that old pilot of the livid lake,  
 Around whose eyes two fiery circles shone.  
 But those poor souls, whose naked forms did quake, 100  
 Changed colour when they heard his accents hoarse,  
 And gnashed their teeth, and then blaspheming spake  
 (On God and kith and kin their bitter curses,  
 Mankind, the place, the time, the evil lot  
 Of their engendering, and their birth perverse. 105  
 Then drew they all together to one spot,  
 With bitter weeping, on that dreary shore,  
 Which waits each soul where fear of God dwells not.  
 And Charon, fiend with eyes that flamed all o'er,  
 With signs and nods around him gathers all, 110  
 And strikes each lingering spirit with his oar.  
 And as in autumn time the sere leaves fall,  
 Each after other, till the branch, left bare,  
 Yields to the earth its spoils funereal,  
 In like wise Adam's evil offspring fare. 115  
 They from that shore leap, beckoned, one by one,  
 As hawk that at its lure swoops down through air

<sup>91</sup> The "other ports" are in *Purg.* ii. 101 identified with the mouth of the Tiber, to which, in the strange belief of the time, the souls that were admitted to Purgatory fitted after death. Charon's refusal rests (1) on the ground that Dante is not dead, (2) on the fact that Hell is not his doom.

<sup>112</sup> Another echo from Virgil (*Æn.* vi. 309)—

"Quam multa in silvis auctumque frigore primo  
 Lapsa cadunt folia."

A v. l. 101 114 gives "sees on the earth"

<sup>117</sup> The first of a long series of similitudes from the art of falconry, in which we may well believe the poet, as an expert, watched his birds, in their varying moods and acts, with a sympathetic insight (*C.* xvii. 127, xxii. 130, *Purg.* xiii. 70, xix. 64, *Par.* xix. 64)

So they o'er those dark waters swift are gone,  
 And ere o' the further side they disembark,  
 On this another troop together run. 120  
 "My son," my kind guide's accents bade me hark,  
 "Those who beneath the wrath of God have died,  
 From all lands gather to this region dark,  
 And eager are to pass across the tide ;  
 For God's stern justice so doth urge them on, 125  
 That fear becomes desire unsatisfied .  
 But never passeth here a guiltless one.  
 If, therefore, Charon vex his soul for thee,  
 What his words mean will now to thee be known "  
 So ended he, then shook exceedingly 130  
 That gloomy region, so that still my fear  
 Bathes me with sweat, though but in memory  
 The tearful land sent forth a blast of air,  
 Whence there flashed forth as lightning's vermeil light,  
 Which not one organ of my sense did spare . 135  
 I fell as one whom slumber robs of sight.

## CANTO IV.

*The First Circle—The Limbo of Infants—The Dwellers in the Elysian Fields*

THERE came to break that deep sleep of the brain  
 A peal of thunder loud, that startled me  
 As one whom force doth to awake constrain  
 And with mine eyes thus rested, I to see  
 Turned me, stood up, and steadfast gazed around, 5  
 To know the region where I chanced to be.

<sup>121</sup> The lines that follow give the "law" promised in l. 76, and it is one of profound ethical significance. The doom of the souls that die in the wrath of God (*sc.* in utter impenitence) cannot be altered, but they acknowledge that doom to be just. Fear vanishes with hope, and turns into desire. They seek to know the worst, and meet their punishment, some with blasphemies (l. 102) and defiance (C. xiv 63, xxiv 3), some with the calmness of resignation (C. v 88-93). Comp. *Purg.* i 431.

<sup>130</sup> Are the earthquake and the thunder and the flash and the sleep to be looked on as a poetical device to evade the difficulty as to passing Acheron in Charon's boat, or may we think of them as entering, without volition, as men dream of thunder, into Dante's vision? Anyhow he leaves the tale of his passage over the river untold. The story of *Purg.* ix 10-60 suggests the thought of a journey like Ezekiel's, in "the visions of God" (*Ezek.* viii 3).

In very deed upon the brink I found  
 Myself, of that abyss of direst woe,  
 Where thunders roar, of groans that know no bound.  
 Dark was it, deep, o'erclouded so below, 10  
 That though I sought its depths to penetrate,  
 Nought to mine eyes its form did clearly show.  
 "Now pass we down to that world desolate,"  
 Began the poet, pale with sore affright.  
 "I will go first; thou shalt as second wait." 15  
 And I, who had that change of hue in sight,  
 Said, "How shall I go, if e'en thou dost fear,  
 Whose woe it is my doubting to set right?"  
 And he to me: "Their anguish who dwell there  
 My face with pity's pallor overspread, 20  
 Which to thy thought as terror did appear.  
 Onward, for long the way we have to tread."  
 And so he passed, and made me enter in  
 Where the first circle girds the abyss of dread  
 And here, so far as hearing truth might win, 25  
 No other plaint rose up than that of sighs,  
 That made the air all tremulous within  
 Thus from the sorrow without pain did rise,  
 Endured by those vast multitudes and great,  
 Which infants, men, and women did comprise. 30  
 Spake my good Master: "Ask'st thou not their fate,  
 Who are these spirits that thus meet thy view?  
 Ere thou pass on I will thou know their state,

<sup>7</sup> Acheron has been passed, how we are not told. As in *Rev* xi. 19, "lightnings and thunders and voices" are the prelude of the new Apocalypse. The seer stands at the mouth of the great pit which he is to descend through its ever-narrowing circles and varied scenery till he reaches the centre of the earth. Where, on what spot of earth, the descent begins, we are not told. Canto xxxiv. 115 seems to suggest a valley near Jerusalem, possibly that of Jehoshaphat (*C* x. 11). The nearest approach to measurement is in the tenth Bolgia, which is described as having a circuit of twenty-two miles (*C* xxix. 9, xxx. 86). Commentators (Veltelli), in whom the surveyor temperament predominated, have given the diameters of each circle as varying from 280 miles in the first to 3½ miles in the lowest (*N* Q, 4th S. I., 607).

<sup>21</sup> The emotion caused by the torments of the lost seem to vary with their character. Here, entering on his new region, to which he and his friends were doomed, there is a "pity" that pales Virgil's face as if with fear. In presence of more virulent evil, pity and piety become incompatible (*C* xx. 28).

<sup>22-42</sup> The state described is that of the *levisima damnatio*, which Augustine (*c. Julian* v. 44) assigns to unbaptized infants, and which Dante extends to the heathen who have sought righteousness. There is no pain, but neither is there hope for the beatific vision, which the souls desire in vain. Comp. *Purg.* vii. 25-36. Dante accepts the dogma of his Church, but here, as in *Par.* xix. 70-78, not without the wish that he could believe otherwise. He has to



That they sinned not; if they have merits too,  
 These, baptism lacking, nothing help alone, 35  
 The portal this of Faith thou holdest true  
 And if they lived ere Christian creed was known,  
 They did not in due measure God adore,  
 And of this number I myself am one.  
 Through these defects, not other guilt or more, 40  
 We are among the lost, but so far pained,  
 That without hope we live in yearning sore "  
 When I heard this, great grief my heart constrained  
 Because some persons good and brave I knew,  
 Who in that outer *limbus* were detained 45  
 ' Tell me, O Lord and Master, tell me true,"  
 So I began in eager wish to know  
 Tho faith which every error doth subdue,  
 " Did ever any by his merits go,  
 Or by another's, hence, and then was blest?" 50  
 And he, who knew what lay my speech below,  
 Made answer " I was but a new-come guest,  
 When here I saw a Mighty One descend,  
 And on His brow the conqueror's crown did rest ;  
 He bade our first sire's spirit with him wend, 55  
 Abel, his son, and Noah too did bring,  
 Moses, lawgiver, loyal to the end,  
 Abraham the Patriarch, David, too, the king,  
 Israel, with all his children, and his sire,  
 Rachel, for whom he bore such suffering, 60  
 And others, whom He placed in Heaven's blest choir ,  
 And thou shouldst know that human spirits none  
 Gained before these salvation's joy entire."

crush the instinctive questionings of what we feel to have been his truer nature MSS and *Vernon's* Latin version are in favour of the reading *forte* in l. 37, but *forte* gives a far preferable meaning So *Lub*

<sup>45</sup> The term *limbus* (literally *fringe*, the borderland between pain and peace) had become technical in the mediæval eschatology Milton uses it in his "limbo of vanities," and it survives in the popular phrase *in limbo*

<sup>46-50</sup> The question is answered from the Catholic doctrine of the "descent into Hades," the "preaching to the spirits in prison" (1 *Pet* iii 19) as interpreted by the Gospel of Nicodemus (See the *Study on the Descent into Hell* in the writer's *Spirits in Prison*) Dante follows the current view that the purpose of the descent was to deliver the patriarchs of the Old Testament from their imprisonment and transport them to Paradise The epithet "loyal" or "obedient" belongs to Moses (*Heb* iii 5), and not to Abraham, as Longfellow takes it Rachel, as the type of heavenly contemplation (*C* ii 302, *Purg* xxvii 104, *Par* xxxii 8), is named, while Sarah and Rebecca and Leah are passed over In the "Mighty One" of l. 53 we have an instance of the reverence which leads the poet, while in Hell, to avoid

Not for his speaking ceased we to pass on,  
 But tracked the pathway through the forest dense,— 65  
 Forest, I say, of thick trees, souls each one.  
 Not long had we our journey made from thence,  
 This side the pit's mouth, when I saw a flame,  
 Which girt a hemisphere of gloom intense  
 Some distance were we still when that sight came, 70  
 Yet not so far but I discerned in part  
 That those who dwelt there were of honoured fame  
 "Thou, who dost honour knowledge and each art,  
 Say who are these that in such honour dwell,  
 It sets them from the others' ways apart?" 75  
 And he to me. "That fair fame, honoured well,  
 Which in thy life above there thou dost know,  
 Wins grace in Heaven which makes them thus excel"  
 Meantime a voice I heard which sounded so  
 "Give honour to the poet loftiest, 80  
 His shade returns, that left short while ago"  
 After the voice was silent and at rest,  
 Four mighty shades I saw towards me move,  
 With looks that showed as neither pained nor blest.  
 Then spake to me the Master whom I love. 85  
 "Look thou on him who walks with sword in hand,  
 Whose place before the three his rank doth prove.

uttering the name of the Christ. Other traces of the Gospel of Nicodemus are found in C. viii 125. The statement of l. 64 is that embodied in the *Se Deum*, "When Thou hadst overcome the sharpness of death, Thou didst open the kingdom of Heaven to all believers." In l. 69 I follow Lombardi in the rendering *vincis* (from the Lat. *vincere*) as "girt" rather than "conquered," as most translators and commentators take it. The symbolism seems to be that the wise and good among the heathen were as lights shining in the darkness.

71-80 We note the emphasis of the fourfold iteration of the thought and syllables of "honour."

81-90 The list is significant as showing whom Dante recognised as the great poets of the world: (1) Homer he knew possibly only at second hand, as in the quotations given in the translation of Aristotle (*Conv.* iv 20), or by repute. There is no evidence that he had studied him as he had studied Virgil. Homer was translated into Latin at the request of Petrarch or Boccaccio by Leontius of Calabria, but an earlier version, ascribed to a Pindar of Thebes, was current before Dante's time (*Qu. Rev.* xxi 312), though *Conv.* i 7 shows that he did not know it. On the other hand, it may be noted that he at least knew a "little Greek," and could discuss etymologies (*Conv.* ii 3, iii 11, iv 1), and C. xxvi 90-142 implies an acquaintance with at least the story of the *Odyssey*. The passages usually cited as showing that he knew no Greek (*Conv.* i 7, ii 15) do not prove it. In fact, the former tends the other way. A critic who could say that the Psalms lost their beauty in passing from Hebrew into Greek must have had some knowledge of both languages. (2) The prose works of Dante supply many quotations from Horace (*Conv. passim*), but I do not remember any traces of him in the *Commedia*. (3) Ovid is frequently quoted in the *Conv.* (u 6, iv 27, and in the *Comm.*), and in the transformation scene of C. xxv Dante distinctly challenges a comparison with the *Metamorphoses*. (4) Lucan seems to have been almost as much studied as Virgil, probably because the subject of the *Pharsalia*, like that of the

See Homer, sovran poet of our band :  
 Horace comes next, for biting satire known ,  
 Ovid the third, and Lucan last doth stand. 80  
 Because with me they all are so far one,  
 Sharing the name that one voice uttered clear,  
 They do me honour , well that deed is done ”  
 Thus saw I round that lord whom all revere,  
 Lord of high song, that goodly company, 95  
 While he o'er others soared like eagle there.  
 And when in converse some short time passed by,  
 They to me turned with sign of greeting kind,  
 And he, my Master, smiled as pleased thereby.  
 And yet more honour they to me assigned, 100  
 For they with me their lofty rank did share,  
 And I was sixth amid that might of mind  
 So did we onward to the bright light fare,  
 Speaking of things it is as good to keep  
 In silence, as to speak was then and there. 105  
 We came where nobly rose a fortress steep,  
 Which seven high walls encircled as a screen,  
 Guarded by streamlet flowing fair and deep.  
 O'er this we passed as it firm ground had been,  
 And with these sages I through seven gates went 110  
 We reached a field where all was fresh and green ,

*Æneid*, fell in with his theories as to the Divine vocation of the Roman people and its empire. With him also Dante challenges comparison in C. xxv, and quotations abound both in the *Convito* and *Conv.* Statius, also among the poet's best loved authors, is, for a special reason, placed not here, but in Purgatory (*Purg.* xxi 10, 89, *et al.*)

<sup>82</sup> The "one voice" was that which came simultaneously from the lips of the four poets

<sup>86</sup> It has been questioned whether the words apply to Virgil or Homer. The latter seems the more probable. A *v* *l* gives the plural, "of those lords."

<sup>103</sup> Literature hardly records an instance of such supreme self-confidence. Approximate parallels are, however, found in Becon's committing his fame "to the care of future ages," and in Milton's belief that he could write what "the world would not willingly let die." The world has, however, set its seal on Dante's judgment of himself, and placed him not only with that goodly company, but among the "first three" of the true Israel of poets. We remember once more that the "Master of those who know" had defined the "great soul" as one that counted itself worthy of great things being worthy (*Eth. Nicom.* iv 3). In *Purg.* xxii 97-108 we have the names of others—Euripides, Simonides, Plautus, Terence—who were at least among the "chief thirty," but *Æschylus* and *Sophocles* are not even named. Except as mentioned by Latin writers they were, of course, unknown to Dante.

<sup>104</sup> The poet's reticence has its parallel in a *Cor.* xii 4. Here also there were things which it "was not lawful" was not possible, "for a man to utter." May we think of the calling of the poet, and the conditions of excellence in it, and the mysteries of Nature and of history, as among the things that were in Dante's mind?

<sup>107</sup> The seven walls, each with its separate gate, may represent the *Trivium* (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) and *Quadrivium* (music, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy) of mediæval education, but I do not feel sure that the symbolism is more definite than that of the "seven pillars" of the house of Wisdom in *Prov.* ix 1.

A tribe was there with eyes sad, grave, down-bent,  
 And power to rule was on their faces traced;  
 Seldom they spoke, grave voice with sweetness blent.  
 So moving on one side, our feet we placed 118  
 On open ground, high, full of light and clear,  
 And all were seen who that fair region graced.  
 There straight before me, lo! the forms appear,  
 On the enamelled green, of spirits wise,  
 Whom to have seen makes me myself revere. 120  
 I saw Electra with her brave allies,  
 Hector and brave Æneas there I knew;  
 Cæsar, all armed, with clear and falcon eyes,  
 Penthesilea and Camilla too  
 I saw, and with them Latium's ancient king, 122  
 Who with his child Lavinia sat in view.  
 Bintus I saw, who Tarquon low did bring,  
 Cornelia, Marcia, Julia, Lucrece, nigh,  
 And, all alone, Saladin wandering  
 When I to gaze a little raised mine eye, 124  
 The Master I beheld of those that know,  
 Sit 'midst his wisdom loving family,

118 The description falls in with the report which others give of Dante's own demeanour as cold, stern, reticent (*Boccaccio V D*, *Ill* ix 136), and his hatred, like Bishop Butler's, of people who "will be talking Laughter and jests he left (as in the story of his reply to Can Grande) to the huffoons in whom princes delighted, on the principle that like loves like."

121-130 With the exception of Saladin every name is connected with Rome and with Troy, as the stock from which the Romans sprang. Electra is the daughter of Atias and mother of Dardanus (*Æneid* viii 134 *De Mon* ii 3). The "falcon eye" of Cæsar came from Suetonius ("nigris vegetisque oculis," *Jul Cæs* c 45). For Camilla see note on C. i 107. Penthesilea is the Queen of the Amazons who fought on the side of Troy (*Æneid* xi 659-663). Lucretia is naturally associated with Brutus. Marcia is there, but not her husband Cato, whom we meet with afterwards as the warden of the Mount of Purgatory (*Purg* i 31), and whose heroic character Dante may have learnt to admire from Lucan Saladin apart from these as belonging to a different race and faith, is named in *Conv* iv 22 as distinguished for his kingly liberality.

131-145 The list of writers that follows like that of heroes that precedes, throws light on Dante's preferences as a student. We may feel sure that he had known, at first or second hand, the sages whom he quotes. The "Master of those who know" is, of course, Aristotle, of whom he speaks in *Conv* i 1 as the philosopher, in *Conv* iv 2 as "worthy of honour and obedience" and whose works (translated into Latin from Arabic translations) were the basis of the scholastic philosophy of the 13th century, as represented by Roger Bacon and Aquinas. A copy of Aristotle's chief works *Ethics*, *Physics*, *Metaphysics*, translated from the Greek, had been given to the University of Bologna by the Emperor, Frederick II (*Kingdon*, i 442 *Faust* i 336). No less than seventy quotations from his works are found in the *Conv* (*Osau* 204). He alone sits as a teacher. Plato, whose idealism was more in harmony with Dante's mind than the more formal system of Aristotle, may have been known by him through that philosopher, through Cicero, and through Augustine. Democritus of Abdera (B.C. 460-357) the "laughing philosopher," maintained the "fortuitous concourse of atoms," as explaining the phenomena of the universe. Diogenes (B.C. 412-323) was the cynic philosopher of Sinope, Anaxagoras of Clazomenæ (B.C. 500-428), the master of Pericles and Socrates. Thales of Miletus (B.C. 625-546), the founder of the Ionian school of physicists, Heraclitus (B.C. 513), the "weeping philosopher" of Ephesus. Zeno (B.C. 362-264), the founder of the Stoic school. These Dante may have read of in Aristotle or possibly in Diogenes Laertius. In Dioscorides,

All gaze admiring, all due honour show  
 There Socrates and Plato saw I pass,  
 Who near him stand while others further go, 10  
 He who to chance assigned the world's great mass,  
 Thales and Zeno and Empedocles,  
 Diogenes and Anaxagoras,  
 And Heraclite and Dioscorides,  
 Explorer true of every quality, 140  
 Orpheus and Linus, Tully joined with these,  
 Sage Seneca and Euclid's science high,  
 Averrhoes, who the far-famed Comment wrote,  
 Hippocrates and Galen, Ptolemy  
 And Avicen,—the rest I cannot note; 14  
 For my full theme bids me so quick pursue,  
 That far beneath the fact my poor words float  
 That group of six divideth into two,  
 My wise Guide leads me by another way,  
 Out of the calm to where winds trembling blew, 140  
 And I pass on where no light shudders its ray

## CANTO V.

*The Second Circle—Sins of the Flesh—Paolo and Francesca*

FROM the first circle thus I passed below  
 Down to the second, which less space doth bound,  
 And keener pain, that goads to cries of woe

the physician and botanist of Anazarba in Cilicia (2d cent. A.D.) and in Hippocrates (n.c. 460-357), the father of Greek medicine, and Galen (A.D. 130-200) its later master we may trace the poet's studies as a member of the Florentine guild of apothecaries (*Speziali*).<sup>1</sup> The order of the names Orpheus, Tullius, Linus (or in some MSS. Livius) seems determined by rhythmical necessities. Euclid the mathematician (B.C. 400) and Ptolemy (B.A.D. 139-167) the astronomer and geographer represent the scientific side of the poet's studies, in which the treatise *De Aquâ et Terrâ* shows him to have been a master. Avicenna (or Ibn Sina), the Arabic physician of Spain (A.D. 980-1037) and Averrhoes (Ibn Roschid) the metaphysician and philosopher (A.D. 1149-1198) whose commentary on Aristotle was from the 13th to the 14th century the great text book of all European universities, are noticeable as showing the range of Dante's reading. The student of English literature will remember that Hippocrates, Galen, Dioscorides, Avicenna, Averrhoes, appear part of the physician's library in Chaucer (*Prolog* to *C. S.* ll. 434-435), and that Roger Bacon constantly refers to them.

<sup>151</sup> Homer, Lucan, Ovid, Horace remain in their quiet and peaceful region. On leaving them the two travellers pass once more into the darkness.

<sup>1</sup> From the *Limbo* or first circle of the pit the pilgrims descend into the second. Here there is the *pena sensus* as well as the *pena damni*: and those who are in it are (l. 38) those that have yielded to the sins of the flesh.

There dreaded Minos stands and snarls around,  
 And tries the crimes of those that enter in, 5  
 Judges, and sends as he his tail hath wound.  
 I say that when the soul whom Hell doth win  
 Comes in his presence, all its guilt confessed,  
 And when that grand inquisitor of sin  
 Sees in what part of Hell that soul should rest, 10  
 He round his frame his mighty tail doth throw  
 As oft as he would fix its grade unblest.  
 Ever in size the crowd before him grew,  
 And each in turn approaches and is tried,  
 They speak, they hear, and then are thrust below. 15  
 "O thou who to this hostel dark hast plied  
 Thy way," spake Minos, when he saw me there,  
 And for a time his great work put aside,  
 "How thou dost come, in whom dost trust, take care  
 Let not the open entrance cheat thy soul." 20  
 Then spake my Guide "What means this cry I hear?  
 Seek not his destined journey to control,  
 So is this willed where what is willed is one  
 (Ask thou no more) with might that works the whole"  
 Then to mine ears deep groans an entrance won, 25  
 Before unheard. I now had reached a spot  
 Where smote mine ear loud wail and many a groan  
 I came unto a place where light was not,  
 Which murmurs ever like a storm-vext sea,  
 When strife of winds in conflict waxes hot. 30  
 That storm of Hell, which rest doth never see,  
 Bears on the spirits with its whirling blast,  
 And, hurling, dashing, pains exceedingly.

<sup>4</sup> Minos, like Charon, is reproduced from Virgil (*Æn* vi 437), and fulfils the same function and occupies an analogous position. Dante, however, with a strange grotesqueness which culminates in the fiend sports of C xxii, transforms him into a demon, and the fate of those whom he condemns is decided not by the "urn," as in Virgil, but by the twisting of his tail. Partly this may be explained by the fact that he remembered he was writing what he had chosen to call a "Comedy," partly by his wish that, after the *limbos* and Elysian fields of the last canto, there should be nothing in Hell that had either dignity or beauty. Medieval art abounds, it need hardly be said, in examples of a like grotesqueness in the gargoyles and miscreants of its churches.

<sup>50</sup> An echo of the *facilis descensus*, the "*patet atrii Janua Ditis*," of *Æn* vi 126, perhaps also of *Matt* vii 13. Minos, as an evil power, seeks to thwart the pilgrimage which is to end in the salvation of the pilgrim.

<sup>28-30</sup> The penalty is again retributive (*Wisd* xi 17). The doom of those who have yielded to the impulses of passion is to be driven in never-ending restlessness, through the darkness

When they before the precipice have passed,  
 There pour they tears and wailing and lament, 35  
 There curses fierce at God's high power they cast.  
 And then I knew this pain did those torment  
 Who had in life been sinners carnally,  
 And bowed their reason to lust's blandishment  
 And as the starlings through the winter sky 40  
 Float on their wings in squadron long and dense,  
 So doth that storm the sinful souls sweep by.  
 Here, there, up, down, it drives in wild suspense,  
 Nor any hope their agony allays,  
 Or of repose or anguish less intense. 45  
 And as the cranes fly chanting out their lays,  
 And in the air form into lengthened line,  
 So these I looked on wailing went their ways,  
 Souls borne where fierce winds, as I said, combine  
 Wherefore I spake: "O Master, who are these, 50  
 The people who in this dark tempest pine?"  
 "The first of these," he said, "of whom 'twould please  
 Thy mind to hear, was once an empress famed  
 Of many peoples, nations, languages;  
 So sunk was she in foul lusts, evil-shamed, 55  
 That in her law she framed no rule but will,  
 That so her guilt might pass less sorely blamed  
 Semiramis is she, whose record still  
 We read, who Ninus married and replaced.  
 She ruled the lands the Soldan's power doth fill. 60  
 The next is she who, by her love disgraced,  
 Sought death, unfaithful to Sichæus dead.  
 Then Cleopatra, wanton and unchaste."

which they have made their own, by the whirling blast Their movements recall to the mind of the observer of Nature the flight of starlings, their cries ("las" was the Provençal term for a dirge) those of cranes.

<sup>60</sup> The reading adopted by Bianchi, Lubin, and others, *suggest delite*, "who Ninus suckled and embraced," though it has less MS authority, gives a better sense. The sin of incest was that noted in Orosius (*Hist* i 4), the text-book of Dante's ancient history, as the crowning sin of the Messalina-like lust of Semiramis (see Gower, *Conf Am* v). The *succedette*, in itself pointless, probably originated in a euphemistic feeling foreign to the mind of Dante. Orosius, indeed, names Ninus as the son of Semiramis, Ninus as her husband, but the names are so closely allied that each may have been mistaken by transcribers for the other. Possibly, however, Dante derived his knowledge from the *Trilog* of his master, Brunetto, and he (l 26) represents Semiramis as the wife of Ninus I, the mother of Ninus II, succeeding him on his death, and then, as also, perhaps, before, startling men by her cruelty and lust. So far as it goes, this justifies the reading *succedette*.

<sup>61</sup> Dido. Comp. *Æn.* iv. 630-692, *Par* ix 97

Then Helena I saw, whose beauty bred  
 Such evil times; the great Achilles too,  
 Who to the end in love's might combated. 65  
 Paris and Tristan, thousands more in view,  
 He, with his finger pointing, showed and named,  
 Whom love from this our earthly life withdrew.  
 And as I listened to my Teacher famed, 70  
 Telling of all those dames and knights of old,  
 I was as lost, and grief its victory claimed. 1  
 And I began: "O Poet, I am bold  
 To wish to speak awhile to yonder pair,  
 Who float so lightly on the storm-blast cold." 75  
 And he to me: "Thou'lt see them when they fare  
 More near to us than pray them by that love  
 That leads them. they will to thy call repair."  
 Soon as the winds their forms towards us move,  
 My voice I lift "O souls sore spent and driven, 80  
 Come ye and speak to us, if none reprove."  
 And e'en as doves, when love its call has given,  
 With open, steady wings to their sweet nest  
 Fly, by their will borne onward through the heaven,  
 So from the band where Dido was they pressed, 85  
 And came towards us through the air malign,  
 So strong the loving cry to them addressed.  
 "O living creature, gracious and benign,  
 Who com'st to visit, through the thick air perse,  
 Us, whose blood did the earth incarnadine, 90

<sup>65</sup> The story alluded to is that of the love of Achilles for Polyxena, the daughter of Priam, which led him to enter unarmed into the temple of Apollo, where he was met and slain by Paris. See Gower, *Conf. Am.* iv. The Briseis story of Homer, *Il.* i, indicates the same temperament.

<sup>67</sup> Paris may be the lover of Helen, the Sir Paris of Troy of Spenser (*F. Q.* iii. 9, 34), but medieval romances also had a hero of that name (see Wart *H. E. P.* i. 146), and the collocation with Tristan suggests the thought that Dante may refer to him. The cycle of Arthurian legends had found its way in the 12th century (*Flour* i. 286), through the Provençal poetry, into Italian and Latin verse-histories. The story of the love of Tristan and Iseult, wife of Mark, the King of Cornwall, is to be found in the *Morte d'Arthur*, and has been told in our own time by Matthew Arnold and Tennyson. Other references to the same literature are found in vv. 128, 137, C xxxii 62, *Par* xvi. 15. The most striking illustration of its popularity is found, perhaps, in the fact that in the 14th century Italian travellers who visited England were eager to see, above all other objects of interest, the Tower of Guinevere in London, the ruins of Camelot, the valley of Tristan's victory, and the cave of Merlin (*Flour* iv. 23).

<sup>68</sup> For a third time the flight of birds supplies the observer with an illustration.

<sup>69</sup> "Perse," though now obsolete, has, from its use by Chaucer (*Prol.* 441), a legitimate claim to be treated as an English word. The colour is defined in *Conv.* iv. 20 as a mixture of black and purple, the black predominating.



Were He our friend who rules the universe,  
 We would pray Him to grant thee all His peace,  
 Since thou hast pity on our doom perverse.  
 Of that which thee to hear and speak shall please  
 We too will gladly with thee speak and hear,  
 While, as it chances now, the wild winds cease.  
 The land where I was born is situate there  
 Where to the sea-coast line descends the Po,  
 To rest with all that to him tribute bear.  
 Love, which the gentle heart learns quick to know,  
 Seized him thou seest, for the presence fair  
 They robbed me of—the mode still deepens woe  
 Love, who doth none beloved from loving spare,  
 Seized me for him with might that such joy bred,  
 That, as thou seest, it leaves me not e'en here  
 Love to one death our steps together led;  
 Caina him who quenched our life doth wait."  
 Thus was it that were borne the words they said,

100

111

<sup>93</sup> The tender sympathy of the speaker reflects that of the writer. They, more than any other of the lost, enlist his pity. They alone breathe, or fain would breathe, their prayer for his peace.

<sup>97</sup> The story of the two lovers, woven into a romance by Boccaccio, may be told more briefly. Francesca was the daughter of Guido da Polenta, lord of Ravenna. There had been war between him and Malatesta, lord of Rimini. A marriage was planned as a condition of peace between Gianciotto, the eldest son of the latter, and Francesca, but as Gianciotto was deformed, his younger brother, Paolo (*Paolo si bello*) was sent to Ravenna as his proxy for the betrothal. Francesca loved him, and thought that he was to be her future husband. On her arrival at Rimini she was undeceived, but the passion of the two lovers continued, and the husband finding them together put them both to death. They were buried together at Pesaro whence they were removed to Rimini, and three centuries later were found there, with the silken garments in which they had been shrouded still fresh (*Troja, Veltro*, in Cary). The story must have been well known at Ravenna, but if it was first known to Dante after he went there in A.D. 1316, it must have been a comparatively late insertion in his poem. The date of the murder was A.D. 1289. The fact that Francesca had been Gianciotto's wife for more than twelve years, and that Paolo, who was the elder brother, had also been married for sixteen years, gives the story a somewhat different complexion from that with which art and poetry have invested it (*Faust* i. 483. *Weg* 39, and *Lonini, Memorie Storiche* in an *Art* by T. A. Trollope in *S. Paul's Mag.* vol. vii.). In his earlier life Dante was with Francesca's brother at the battle of Campaldino (1289), and her father was Podestà of Florence in 1290. His latest years were spent under the protection of her nephew at Ravenna.

<sup>97</sup> The description indicates Ravenna as pointing to its being on the coast of the Adriatic Gulf, just south of the mouth of the Po, a canal from which formerly formed its harbour. It is now four miles from the sea (*Harv.* ii. 599).

<sup>100</sup> As in the story of Ugolino (*C.* xxxii. 19), Dante leaves the familiar details of the story and goes to the heart of the whole matter, to facts which could have been known to none, but which he evolved, with a marvellous vividness, from his own insight into what must have been, and in doing this his treatment of the story, in its reticence and its modesty, presents a striking contrast to the way in which the story might have been told by a poet of coarser nature. If it is true that "brevity is the soul of wit," it is no less true that it is also the soul of that indescribable element in poetry which we call pathos. The story has been dramatised, and with variations, by Leigh Hunt and Silvio Pellico, and translated by Byron.

<sup>100</sup> "The mode, *sc.* the suddenness, the shame, the brutal ferocity, of the revenge which cut the lovers off in "the blossom of their sins, with no time for repentance." *A v.* l. gives *modo*, which, however, has little to commend it.

<sup>100</sup> *Caina*. The lowest of the circles of Hell, the region of perpetual cold, the doom of the treacherous murderers of their nearest kindred (*C.* xxxii. 58).

And when I heard those souls in sad estate,  
 I bowed my face, and so long kept it low, 110  
 Till spake the poet · "What dost meditate?"  
 When I made answer, I began, "Ah woe!  
 What sweet fond thoughts, what passionate desire  
 Led to the pass whence such great sorrows flow?"  
 Then I turned to them and began inquire, 115  
 "Francesca," so I spake, "thy miseries  
 A plying grief that makes me weep inspire  
 But tell me, in the time of those sweet sighs,  
 The hour, the mode, in which love led you on  
 Doubtful desires to know with open eyes" 120  
 And she to me: "A greater grief is none  
 Than to remember happier seasons past  
 In anguish, thus thy Teacher well hath known.  
 But if thou seek'st to learn what brought at last  
 Our love's first hidden root to open sight, 125  
 I'll tell, as one who speaks while tears flow fast  
 It chanced one day we read for our delight  
 How love held fast the soul of Lancelot;  
 Alone were we, nor deemed but all was right,  
 Full many a time our eyes their glances shot, 130  
 As we read on, our cheeks now paled, now blushed,  
 But one short moment doomed us to our lot.

113 The question, first thought and then uttered, comes, it may be, from one who had known and had yielded to like temptations. It was from no wish to weave a story of romance, but as a safeguard for himself and others, that he seeks to know how the lovers who "meant no ill" were led to the sin which involved them both on earth and behind the veil in so terrible a doom.

118 The "teacher" is probably Boethius, to whose *De Consolatione Philosophia* Dante (*Conv* 1 2) had turned in his grief for the death of Beatrice "*infelicitissimum genus est infortunium fuisse felicem et non esse*" (ii 4). The thought has been reproduced in English literature by Chaucer (*Troil* and *Cres* iii), and in Tennyson's well-known line—

"That a sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things"

128 The story is found in the Italian romance of *Lancelot of the Lake*, c. 66, as given in *Scart* 1 46. The Queen Guinevere loved Lancelot, and was loved in return, but it was through Galeotto, or Gallehaut, that they were brought together, and she, at his prompting, and on his promise of secrecy, kissed her lover (*comp. Par* xvi 15). It is open to conjecture what grounds, if any, Dante had for this feature of the story. Was the romance of Lancelot found in the room where the lovers met their fate? Or did the poet enter his protest against the erotic character which so largely tainted this form of the Provençal literature of his time? Had he seen in others, or felt in himself, its fatal power for evil as a stimulus of the passions which it described? Anyhow, we may remember that Guido Novello, the poet's host at Ravenna, was nephew to Francesca, and that her father had been Podesta of Florence in 1290 (*Parr* 1 475), and that there may therefore have been some grounds, within Dante's reach, for the story as he tells it. Gallehaut, it may be noted, is not to be identified, as some translators have done, with the Galahad of the Arthurian cycle, who appears, as in Tennyson's poem, as the pattern of a stainless purity.

When as we read how smile long sought for flushed  
 Fair face at kiss of lover so renowned,  
 He kissed me on my lips, as impulse rushed, 125  
 All trembling; now with me for aye is bound  
 Writer and book were Gallehault to our will.  
 No time for reading more that day we found."  
 And while one spirit told the story, still  
 The other wept so sore, that, pitying, I 140  
 Fainted away as though my grief would kill,  
 And fell, as falls a dead man, heavily.

## CANTO VI.

*The Third Circle—Cerberus—Sins of Gluttony—Cracco*

THEN when the sense returned that I had lost,  
 Through pity for those two so near allied,  
 With pangs of sorrow stunned and tempest-tost,  
 New torments and new tortures on each side  
 I saw around me as I onward passed, 5  
 And turned, and here and there the prospect spied  
 In the third circle, where the rain falls fast,  
 Am I,—eternè, curst, cold, and working woe,  
 Its law and state unchanged from first to last;  
 Huge hail, dark water, whirling clouds of snow 10  
 There through the murky air come sweeping on,  
 Foul smells the earth which drinks this in below,  
 And Cerberus, fierce beast, like whom is none,  
 Barks like a dog from out his triple jaws,  
 At all the tribe those waters close upon. 15

125 The one solitary instance in the whole poem, of the pity which has the same effect as terror. Comp. "I fell at his feet as dead" (*Rev.* i. 17).

7 The third circle is that of the gluttonous. The scene is painted as a contrast to the banquets, where all was bright and warm and cheerful, and the wine-cup passed merrily, and the air was laden with perfume, for which they had sold their lives. Cerberus, described as in *Æn.* vi. 427-430, but, like Charon, transformed into a demon (*l.* 32), is rightly the watch dog of the region, his triple jaws and his eager cravings being the symbol of the unrestrained voracity of those who were condemned to it. They, in their turn, he grovelling in the foulness of the mire, as they had grovelled in their lifetime in the foulness of their pleasures. There may be worse sins and worse torments than those of gluttony, but of all vices it was, from Dante's standpoint, the most loathsome (*l.* 48).

Red glare his eyes and taloned are his paws,  
 His belly large, his beard all greased and foul;  
 Those souls he tears, flays, quarters, with his claws.  
 That rain-storm makes them all like fierce dogs howl;  
 This side with that they vainly seek to screen, 20  
 And round and round those wretched sinners roll.  
 When Cerberus, that great serpent, us had seen,  
 His mouth he opened and his tusks were shown,  
 And not a limb was as it erst had been.  
 And then my Leader, with his palms out-thrown, 25  
 Took of the earth, and filling full his hand,  
 Into those hungry gullets flung it down.  
 And as a dog who, craving food, doth stand  
 Barking, grows quiet while his food he gnaws,  
 And feels and fights at hunger's fierce command, 30  
 So was it with those vile and filthy jaws  
 Of Cerberus the fiend, who roars so dread,  
 The soul would fain that it might deafness cause  
 And then upon those souls our feet did tread  
 Whom the fierce rain keeps prostrate on the ground, 35  
 In semblance men, yet shadows vain and dead.  
 Prone on their face they all of them were found,  
 Save one, who rose and upright sat when he  
 Beheld us passing, on our journey bound.  
 "O thou who thus art led this Hell to see," 40  
 He spake, "recall me, if thou hast the power;  
 Thou had'st thy being ere I ceased to be."  
 And I to him: "Thy anguish keen and sore,  
 It may be, makes me utterly forget,  
 So that it seems I ne'er saw thee before; 45  
 But tell me who thou art, who thus art set  
 In such sad region, punishment so strange,  
 That worse may be, but fouler never yet?"

<sup>40</sup> For the first time Dante brings before us, as in Hell, one whom he had himself known, and who recognises him. The name Ciacco, which means Hog, may have been the actual name of an individual (it is said to occur in old Florentine records), or the sobriquet of a known person, or the representative of a class, the *Dreuz*, as it were, of Florence. The whole Canto appears to have been written at a time when Dante's mind, in his poverty and exile, was embittered by the thought of the selfish luxury of those whom he had known in Florence. He would show them "to what complexion they must come at last" if they continued so to live. This, I venture to think, rather than any personal or political vindictiveness, is the explanation of his naming so many of those whom he places in his Hell. Abstract con-

And he to me : " Thy city, where free range  
 Envy doth take, the sack's full measure crowned, 50  
 Held me ere I that life serene did change ;  
 You townsmen called me Ciacco, swinish hound ,  
 For that foul sin of gluttonous appetite,  
 I, as thou see'st, am thus rain-pelted found  
 Nor am I here alone in this ill plight, 55  
 For all thou see'st are subject to like pain  
 For like offence." Then utterance failed him quite ,  
 And I replied · " Thy sorrows me constrain  
 To weep, Ciacco, for thy lot forlorn ,  
 But say, know'st thou what future doth remain 60  
 For dwellers in that city, faction-torn ;  
 If one just man there be , the occasion whence,  
 Tell me, that it by discord so is worn ?"  
 And he to me " From strife prolonged, intense,  
 They will to blood pass on , the wilder race 65  
 Will drive the other forth with much offence ,  
 A little while, and this within the space  
 Of summers three, shall fall, the other rise  
 By force of him who trims his sails apace.  
 Long will it lift its forehead to the skies, 70  
 Keeping the other under burdens sore,  
 Though it wax wroth and utter angry cries.

denunciations of evil made little impression. He must show them that the life of A. B. and C. D., if they had died and "made no sign," must end in their condemnation. The very consciousness that he was not really condemning would give greater freedom to his speech. Anyhow, he welcomed an opportunity for a thrust at the luxurious "envy" that kept him from his beloved city.

<sup>51</sup> We note the pathos of the touch which contrasts the "life serene" of earth with the foulness of the rain and mire.

<sup>61</sup> Dante's theory of the knowledge of the lost is (as stated in C. x. 100-108) that they see the events that are to come, but are ignorant of what is passing on earth in the present.

<sup>64</sup> The prophecy, purporting to be given in A. D. 1300, was, of course, written after the event, probably some years after. The events may be read in Dino Compagni and Villani (viii. 39). The "blood" points to a fight between the Cerchi and Donati factions (May 1, 1301). The "wilder party" were the former, the Bianchi, perhaps as being but recent settlers in Florence, their former home being the Val di Sieve (*Par.* xvi. 65), who in 1301 succeeded in banishing the leaders of the Neri. The tone in which Dante speaks of both factions indicates the time at which he had begun to "form a party by himself" (*Par.* xvii. 69), perhaps also a vain hope, at the time when he wrote this Canto, that both would court his assistance. In April 1302 the Bianchi, and among them Dante, were in their turn banished.

<sup>66</sup> The English words give the meaning which Boccaccio assigns to *staggia*, lit. "is on the coast," as used by Florentines of one who says one thing and means another, without altogether losing the figurative character of the word. The person alluded to may be either Charles of Valois or Boniface VIII., more probably the latter. The Neri defeated the Bianchi at Castel Piceno in 1302, at Lastra in 1304.

The just are two : and men heed these no more ;  
 Envy and pride and avarice, these three  
 Are sparke that kindle fire in their hearts' core." 75  
 So his sad tearful utterance ended he ;  
 And I to him . " More news I fain would hear,  
 And bounty of more converse grant to me .  
 Tegghiaio, Farnata, worthiest pair,  
 Mosca, Arrigo, Rusticucci too, 80  
 And others who in good deeds strove to share,  
 Tell me where are they ; let them come in view ;  
 Strong wish constrains me , let me learn, I pray,  
 If Heaven console them or Hell make them rue ? "  
 And he " Among the blackest souls are they, 85  
 Sunk in the pit by other than my crime ,  
 Thou may'st behold them, if so low thou stray.  
 But when thou art again in life's sweet clime,  
 I pray thee bring to others' thoughts my name :  
 I may not speak nor answer longer time " 90  
 Then his fixed steadfast gaze ascant became :  
 Awhile he glanced at me, then bowed his head,  
 Then fell, and with those blind ones bore his shame  
 " No more he rises," then my Teacher said,  
 " Thus side the angelic trumpet's awful sound, 95  
 When He shall come, the Potentate so dread,

73 Of the two, Dante himself was probably one Gundo Cavalcanti (see C x 63) or Dino Compagni may have been the other Villani, however (x 89), names two citizens, Barduccio and Giov. Vespucci, who died in 1337, as having been eminently "just and good," and the words may therefore possibly refer to them

74 "Envy, pride, and avarice" are named (*Vill* viii 68) as being the special sins that had involved Florence in disasters. It has been inferred that the three sins are the same as those symbolised by the three beasts of C i, and therefore that the leopard stands for envy, not lust, but the inference is, to say the least, not conclusive

75 Tegghiaio is named with Rusticucci in C xvi 41-44 as among the sinful companions of Brunetto, though of honourable fame on earth. For Farnata see C x 32 for Mosca, C xxviii 106. Arrigo, not named elsewhere in the poem, is identified with Oderigo Fisanu, who, with Mosca, took part in the murder of Buondelmonte (*Vill* v 38).

76 The "other sin," of which men thought lightly, but which Dante had learnt to loathe as hateful, is indicated in C xvi. That form of sensual evil was "black" than the gluttony of Ciaccio

77 The desire for fame still survives, in Dante's teaching (with some special exceptions) C xxxii 94, even in the lost. Better they think (perhaps he also had once thought), to be named as evil than not named at all. Comp C xii 77, xv 119, xvi 85, *et al*

78 The "blind ones" are those who are unable even to lift their heads above the mire, as Ciaccio had done

79 "Potentate" The Italian *Podestà* recalls the thought of the supreme authority often assigned in the Italian republics of the 13th century to some foreign ruler who was called in to repress the factions of the city which invited them. Here, as elsewhere (C x 10, *Purg* i 75), Virgil's knowledge has been enlarged behind the veil, and he knows the doctrines of the Resurrection of the Body and the Last Judgment.

And each, his own sad sepulchre refound,  
 Shall take again the flesh and form of man,  
 And hear what shall eternally resound " 100  
 So passed we through that mixture foul and wan  
 Of shadows and of rain-storm, pacing slow.  
 And on the life to come our converse ran  
 Wherefore I said, "O Master, will this woe,  
 After the last great sentence, increase and,  
 Or lessen, or burn on, nor changing know?" 105  
 And he to me: "Thy science call to mind,  
 Which wills that as each thing perfection gain,  
 Or bliss or bale it feels in fuller kind,  
 Albeit this race, condemned to bitter pains,  
 The true perfection never more may reach, 110  
 There more than here completeness it attains."  
 So wound we round that pathway, and our speech  
 We carried further than I now may tell,  
 And then we came where steps led down the breach,  
 And Plutus found, the deadliest foe in Hell. 115

### CANTO VII.

*Plutus—The Fourth Circle—Sins of Avarice and Profusion—Fortune and her Wheel—The Fifth Circle—The Murmurers*

"*Papè Satan, Aleppe, pap' Satan!*"

So Plutus spake with accents rough and hoarse,  
 And then that gentle Sage, who all could scan,

<sup>103</sup> The question shows how the mind of Dante, like that of Aquinas, brooded over the problems of eschatology. The thought of a mitigation of penalties instinctively suggested itself, but was repressed by the philosophy on which his theology was based. His "science" taught him that the more complete the nature, the greater must be its capacity for joy (*Pas* xiv 43-45) or suffering, and therefore, when the soul was re-united to the body, the lost would be more tormented, and the joys of the blessed would be greater. So Augustine had taught, *Civ. D.* xxi 10, and so Aquinas (*Summa P.* ii, *Suppl. qn.* 93). Here again was another bar to the hope of any respite or alleviation.

<sup>115</sup> Plutus, the money-god, as the special warden of those in the fourth circle, the avaricious and the prodigal, to whom money had been the occasion of sins at opposite extremes.

<sup>1</sup> The wide variety of interpretation shows that these mysterious words have been the *crux* of commentators.

(1) *Papè* = Greek and Latin interjection *pape*, *aleppe* = Heb. *aleph*, in sense of "chief." Hence the whole = "Ho, Satan, Ho, Satan, my Lord," a note of warning against the intruders.

(2) Assuming the words to be Hebrew—"Vomit, O mouth of Satan, vomit, O mouth of Satan, flames of fire" (Scherer).

(3) Assuming them to be Greek—"Ho, Satan, Ho, Satan, unconquered one" (Olivieri).

(4) Assuming them to be French—"*Pas par r, Satan, pas par r, Satan, à l'épée*" (Scart).

The last falls in in part with Benvenuto Cellini's strange story (*Life*, c. xxii) that he heard

Said for my help, "Let not thy fear of worse  
 Now do thee harm; whate'er may be his power,  
 It may not down the rock's face bar thy course." 5  
 Then turning to those swollen lips and sour,  
 He said, "Thou wolf accursèd, silence keep,  
 Thyself, within, with that thy rage devour  
 Not without cause our journey to the deep; 10  
 So is it willed where Michael once on high  
 Made vengeance on the o'erproud rebels sweep"  
 As the full sails before the wind that fly,  
 Fall all entangled when it snaps the mast,  
 So on the earth the fallen fiend did lie. 15  
 Thus to the fourth great pit we downward passed,  
 Advancing further on the dolorous shore,  
 Which all the evil of the world holds fast.  
 Ah! God's great justice, heaping evermore  
 New toils and torments that I then did see! 20  
 Why doth our guilt of sorrow work such store?  
 As by Charybdis rolls the vexèd sea,  
 And breaking, this on that, the billows fall,  
 So must that folk in strange dance ever be  
 Then I beheld a crowd more dense than all, 25  
 And on this side and that, with howling cries,  
 Each rolling with his chest a ponderous ball.  
 They clashed together, then as in a trice  
 Each one turned round and back his way did find,  
 Crying, "Why grasp ye?" "Why let slip your prize?" 30

the words "*Pax, pax, Satan, allez, pax*," spoken by the porter of a court of justice at Paris to the crowd whom he was endeavouring to keep out, and that they reminded him of Dante. Rossetti's scheme led him to see in the words a hint to the initiated that the Pope was Satan.

<sup>7</sup> As in the cave of Minos, the grotesque element prevails over the received classical type of the god of riches.

<sup>12</sup> Comp *Rev* xii 7-9. I take the *strappo* of the original, with Monti, as = *truppa*. Most commentators connect it with *stupro*, and translate "adultery" or "adulterer," the seduction of the angels by Satan being thought of as a spiritual adultery.

<sup>13</sup> The similitude implies travel by sea as well as land. Had Dante, as in l. 22, seen Charybdis, or did he take it as a stock image?

<sup>25-30</sup> The meaning of the strange spectacle is explained in 40-45. Dante had learnt in his Ethics (*Arist. Eth. Nic.* ii 6, iv 1) that virtue lies in the mean between opposite extremes, in the case of money, between those of avarice and prodigality. And here, as in the proverb, the "extremes meet." The whole canto may be read as a special protest against the plutocracy of Florence.

<sup>25</sup> So in *Purg.* xx 11, the "ancient wolf," sc. avarice, is described as having more victims than "all the other beasts" that are symbols of vices. Comp C. l. 51.



So through the circle sad their way they wind  
 On either hand to point just opposite,  
 And ever shout that verse of basest kind.  
 Then each one wheeled, when that point came in sight,  
 Through his half-circle, still that game to play. 35  
 And I, whose heart was pierced with their ill plight,  
 Said, "O my Master, tell me now, I pray,  
 What tribe are these, and were they clerks, that crew  
 Of tonsured ones who on our left hand stay?"  
 Then he to me "All these their mental view 40  
 Had so distorted in their primal life  
 That nothing spent they then in measure due.  
 Those yelping cries with meaning clear are rife,  
 When they the circle's furthest limits reach,  
 Where faults opposed part them in ceaseless strife 45  
 Clerks were all these, with crown left bare on each,  
 Yea, popes and cardinals thou here may'st see,  
 Whom avarice did its utmost mischief teach"  
 And I. "O Master, in such company  
 Needs must be some that I should recognise, 50  
 Who tainted were with this foul malady."  
 And he to me "Vain thought thou dost surmise,  
 The undiscerning life which won them scorn  
 Now makes them dim to keenest searching eyes.  
 For over to these buttings shall they turn, 55  
 These from their tombs again their forms shall rear  
 With fast-closed fist, and those with tresses shorn.  
 Ill giving and ill keeping of that fair  
 Bright world have robbed them, and at this game set,  
 For what it is I use no phrases rare. 60

39 The avaricious, as being the worst of the two, are represented as on the left

46 The avarice of the clergy was with Dante, as with S. Francis of Assisi (*Par.* xi 124-129), with Chaucer, Wyclif, and other reformers, the great cause of the corruptions of the Church and of the world, and popes and cardinals, with their proverbial simony and nepotism, were the most conspicuous examples of it

58 As with the neutrals of C. iii 49, so with those who yield in either form to Mammon-worship, fame and name are lost in the baseness of their lives. The "undiscerning," unknowing life leaves them unknown and undiscerned

60 The poet's *apologia* for the use of the colloquial "game" (Ital. *zuffa*)

Now canst thou, O my son, full vision get  
 Of that brief farce we know as Fortune's boon,  
 For which mankind in scuffle fierce are met.  
 Not all the gold that lies beneath the moon,  
 Or ever lay, of all these souls in pain 65  
 Could give a moment's rest to even one."

Then said I: "Master, tell me yet again,  
 Who is this Fortune of whom thou dost speak,  
 Who the world's wealth doth in her clutch retain?"

And he to me: "O creatures frail and weak, 70  
 What blindness this that leads you to offend!  
 With open mouth do thou my doctrine seek:  
 He whose high wisdom doth all else transcend  
 Made all the heavens and gave to each its guide,  
 So that each part to each its light might send, 75  
 Distributing its radiance far and wide;  
 So likewise for the splendours of the world  
 He did one mistress and queen provide,  
 By whom vain wealth in chance and change is whirled  
 From race to race, from this to that entail, 80  
 Beyond the power of human counsels hurled,  
 Wherefore this people reigns and that doth fail,  
 After her judgment who in secret still,  
 Like snake in grass, makes her intent prevail.  
 Your wisdom cannot stand against her will; 85  
 With forethought, counsel, might, she orders all  
 Her realm, as other gods the realms they fill.  
 Her wheel revolves as ceaseless changes call;  
 Necessity constrains her to be swift,  
 So oft comes one to whom strange changes fall. 90

<sup>70</sup> Men see in the unequal distribution of the world's goods the play of a blind chance, and Dante had at one time felt his faith shaken by it (*Conv.* iv. 12). He is now taught that even there also may be traced the workings of a righteous government, that Fortune is but the minister of the providence of God. He orders through His angels the varying glories of the stars. He, through her, distributes power and riches according to His will. Men may curse or murmur, but she cares not for them. All things, even here, work ultimately for good, and "all her ways are blest." In l. 96 we have the idea, often reproduced in later art, of Fortune and her wheel. Dante may have seen it in a MS. of Boethius (*Leornix*, p. 49).

<sup>84</sup> An echo of the *latei anguis in herba* of Virgil, *Ecl.* iii. 93.

<sup>87</sup> The "other gods" are the angels or intelligences, to each of which is assigned his sphere of action in the material or moral world. Comp. *Caus.* xii. on the movers of the third heaven.

She, she it is on whom men's curses drift,  
     Pilloried in shame by those who owe her praise,  
     And yet their voice in wrongful blame uplift.  
 She hears it not, but ever blessed stays,  
     Joyous, with all that primal company, 95  
     She turns her wheel and blest are all her ways."  
 Now pass we down to greater misery;  
     Already sinks each star which then arose  
     When I set out, to halt we are not free  
 We crossed the circle to the shore where flows 100  
     A stream that bubbling pours its boiling flood  
     Adown a gully opening as it goes.  
 The water was than perse more sombre-hued,  
     And we, with escort of that stream dark-grey,  
     By path of fashion strange our way pursued. 105  
 There, Styx its name, a marsh before us lay,  
     By that sad river made, as it doth gain  
     The shores in dreary dimness wrapt away  
 And I, who stood, to gaze around me fain,  
     Saw people mire-besprent in that foul pit, 110  
     All naked and with looks of angry pain  
 These smote each other; not with hands they hit  
     Alone, but with their heads and breasts and feet,  
     Gnawing each other's bodies bit by bit.  
 Said my good Master, "Son, the souls now meet 115  
     Thine eyes, of those whom anger hath o'erthrown,  
     And I would have thee this as certain treat,  
 That 'neath the pool are those that sigh and groan,  
     And make the water bubble, as we see,  
     Where'er the surface to thy glance is shown. 120  
 Fixed in the mire they say, 'Full sad were we,  
     Where the sun gladdens all the pleasant clime,  
     Bearing within dull mists of melancholy,

100 The pilgrims pass to the fifth circle and the Stygian river. For "perse" see note on C v 89. The description follows the *tristis unda*, the *palus inamabilis* of *Æn* vi 438. The region now entered is that of the murmurers, guilty of the *sio*, an offshoot, in its sullenness, of that of wrath (l. 116), which in the moral theology of the Middle Ages was known as *accidia* (see Chaucer's *Persones's Tale*), the word being translated from the Greek *ἀκείδεια*. They too come under the law of retribution. They had spent their lives in sullen sighs, regardless of the elements of gladness which might be found on all sides. Now they sigh for evermore and with too good cause. The poet's condemnation of the temper of discontent (see l. 93-93) is all the more noteworthy as coming from one who, in exile and poverty, had

Now are we sadder in this black foul slime.  
 This hymn those spirits gurgle in their throat, 12  
 For words full formed are wanting in their rhyme "  
 So wound we where those filthy waters float,  
 A great arc 'twixt the dry bank and the wet,  
 With our eyes turned those mire-gorged souls to note  
 At a tower's foot at last our steps were set. 130

## CANTO VIII.

*Phlegyas—The City of Dis and its Inhabitants—Filippo Argenti—  
 The Closed Gates*

I SAY, my tale continuing, that long while  
 Ere we had reached the foot of that high tower,  
 Our eyes towards the summit of the pile  
 Were drawn by flamelets twain that hovered o'er,  
 While from afar another made reply,— 5  
 So far, that scarce the eye to see had power,  
 And to the sea of wisdom then turned I,  
 And said, "What meaneth this? and yonder fire,  
 What answers it? and who such converse ply?"  
 And he to me: "Across these waves of mire 10  
 What there they wait for may be clearly seen,  
 If the pit's reek hide not thine eyes' desire."  
 Never did bowstring wing an arrow keen  
 That took its way so swift athwart the air,  
 As then I saw a little boat between 15

more cause for sighing than most men. But his mind was open, as the whole poem shows, to the sweet influences of Nature. Had he not the sun and the stars, and could he not find peace in them? (*Ep. in Prov. O. M.* iii. 500.) Comp. Church (p. 152) for Dante's love of light.

<sup>1</sup> Boccaccio's explanation of "continuing" is worth noting. The first seven cantos, as he tells the tale, had been written, in Latin or Italian, at Florence and left there. They were afterward brought to Dante, and then he resumed his work with this word. The story is not worth much, and it is clear that passages like C. i. 102-105, vi. 64-68, must have been written after his exile.

<sup>2</sup> The scenery, possibly drawn from some actual Italian city as approached by night, is at any rate strikingly characteristic of mediæval landscape. The walled city, half surrounded by a slow river and plashy marsh, the two towers on either side of which defend it from attack, the ferry-boat which plies between the two in the absence of a bridge, the fire signals that pass from one to the other at the approach of strangers, these are features which might have been found in Mantua or many cities in Northern Italy which Dante had visited.

The waters glide towards us then and there,  
 Under one boatman's guidance, and no more,  
 Who cried, "Thou felon soul, art thou come here?"  
 "Ah! Phlegyas! Phlegyas! vainly dost thou roar,"  
 Then spake my Master, "at this present turn 20  
 Thine are we only till the pool's passed o'er"  
 And e'en as one who some great fraud doth learn  
 Done to him, sullenly the wrong doth note,  
 So Phlegyas' wrath within his breast did burn  
 My Leader first embarked in that small boat, 25  
 Then made me also come and with him stand,  
 Nor, till I came, as laden did it float.  
 Soon as my Guide and I the bark had manned,  
 That ancient prow starts, cutting deeper wake  
 Than is its wont with other travelling band 30  
 While we the stillness of that dead stream brake,  
 Before me rose one foul with miry clay,  
 And said, "Who'rt thou who ere the time dost take  
 Thy way?" And I: "I come, but do not stay  
 But who art thou that art so filthy grown?" 35  
 And he "Thou see'st I'm one who weeps alway"  
 And I to him "With tears and many a groan,  
 Thou cursed spirit, may'st thou still abide,  
 Foul as thou art, thy face to me is known"  
 Then both his hands he laid on our boat's side, 40  
 Whereat my Master wise thrust him away,  
 And said, "Off, off, where other hounds do hide!"  
 Then he his arms around my neck did lay,  
 My face he kissed and said, "Indignant soul!  
 Blost is the womb that brought thee to the day!" 45

<sup>19</sup> Phlegyas, the father of Ixion, another of the *periphrases* of the *Æn.* (vi 618), where he appears as bearing the doom of many sins, specially of having burnt the temple of Delphi. He too, like Minos and Charon, is demonised in the new mythology; and, partly from his name, as = the fiery one, becomes the guardian fiend of the circle of the wrathful ones.

<sup>20</sup> Of Filippo Argenti, with whom the object of the poet's scorn is identified in l. 61, we learn from Boccaccio that he was a rich cavalier who used to shoe his horses with silver, and thence derived the name, which stuck to him instead of his patronymic, Cavaccioli-Adimari, and that he was conspicuous for the violence of his temper. He belonged to the party of the Neri, and is said to have had a brother who took possession of Dante's property when it was confiscated (*Dec.* ix 8).

<sup>21</sup> Noticeable as the one solitary instance in Dante's writings in which he makes any allusion to his parents. It is reasonable to infer from it that he looked to his mother's influence on his early years as having taught him "the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn," which is part of the true poet's dower. He could rejoice in seeing that insufferable pride brought

Proud wight was he on earth beyond control ,  
 Good act is none his fair fame to attest ;  
 So through his ghost wrath's fiery tempests roll.  
 How many, there as mighty kings addressed,  
 Shall here as swins be wallowing in the mire, 50  
 Leaving a name on which dread shame shall rest ! ”  
 And I “ O Master, great is my desire  
 To see him soused in this foul turbid sea,  
 Before our footsteps from the lake retire.”  
 And he to me “ Ere thou the shore can'st see, 55  
 Thy eager craving shall be satisfied ;  
 'Tis meet such wish should be fulfilled for thee ”  
 Soon after this such havoc I descried  
 Made of him by that mire-besmeared crew,  
 That still I praise God, still my thanks abide. 60  
 “ Have at Filipp' Argenti ! ” was their now  
 Wild cry, and then the spectre Florentine  
 Turned in wild wrath and gnawed his own flesh through  
 And there we left him, not another line  
 I write of him ; but groans fell on mine ears, 65  
 Wherefore before me straight I fixed mine eyne  
 And my good Master said, “ My son, now nears  
 The city which by name of Dis is known,  
 Where a great throng of townsmen stern appears ”  
 And I “ O Master, even now are shown 70  
 Its minarets, far off in yonder dale ;  
 Vermeil, as if from out a furnace thrown,  
 They rise ” And he to me “ The fire of bale  
 Within, eternal, casts that lurid glow,  
 As thou mayst see, in this infernal vale. ’ 75  
 Then we arrived within the fosses low  
 That compass round that land disconsolate ,  
 The walls to me as iron seemed to show

low, the man who had scorned humanity made the laughing-stock of the demons (the exultation has its parallels in Tertullian and Milton), all the more so as he saw in him the type of “ mighty kings ” and others who despised their kind

<sup>60</sup> Dis in *Æn.* vi. 269, 397, appears as the synonym of Pluto. Here, as in the city of the Lord of Hell, we meet, not as in the earlier circles, with the souls of the lost only, but with the demons who are its “ townsmen stern ”

<sup>70</sup> The “ minarets ” (*meschite* = mosques) speak of a knowledge of Eastern cities which may have been learnt from Marco Polo, who returned to Venice in 1295, or other travellers. The word was probably chosen on account of its association with heathen barbarism.

Not without making first a circuit great,  
 We reached a point at which our boatman cried 80  
 With loud harsh voice, "Out with you! see the gate!"  
 More than a thousand at those gates I spied,  
 Rained down from Heaven, who, hot with anger, said,  
 "Who then is this, who, though he hath not died,  
 Now passes through the kingdom of the dead!" 85  
 And then my prudent Master made a sign  
 That he to speak in secret purposed.  
 Then they their great wrath somewhat did confine,  
 And said, "Come thou alone, and let him go  
 Who hath so rashly crossed this kingdom's hue, 90  
 Alone retracing his mad path below;  
 Let him his power test; here shalt thou remain,  
 Who hast his guide been through this land of woe."  
 Think, Reader, how my soul was filled with pain  
 On hearing of those cursèd words the sound, 95  
 For ne'er I thought our earth to see again.  
 "O my dear Teacher, more than seven times found  
 My safety and defence, who me hast freed  
 From peril great that compassed me around,  
 O leave me not," I said, "in such sore need, 100  
 If going farther be to us denied,  
 Let us go back together with all speed."  
 Then that dear Lord, who thus far had been guide,  
 Said, "Fear thou not, our journey none can stay,  
 By such a high One is it ratified, 105  
 But wait thou here for me, and thy dismay  
 Comfort, and feed thy soul with hope's bright smile,  
 I will not leave thee in this dark world's way."  
 So he departs and leaves me there awhile,  
 My gentlest Father, I in doubt remain, 110  
 For 'Yes' and 'No' my wildered brain beguile

<sup>80</sup> The wrath of the demons springs from their seeing in Dante one over whom they have no power, and whose journey through Hell will be for his own salvation, and, through his teaching, for that of others.

<sup>85</sup> Commentators count up the seven instances of deliverance from the wolf, Charon, and others, but the number is probably used indefinitely, as in *Prov* xxiv 16, *Eccles* xi. 3.

<sup>100</sup> The faith of Virgil represents, of course, here, as in C. iii 95, that of the poet himself. He has learnt from the higher wisdom which reproves his doubt to say, "If God be for us, who can be against us?" Not less truly does Virgil's half-doubting fear, or wrath that looks like fear, represent the conflicting feelings in Dante's soul.

What he spake to them I could not hear plain,  
 But with them he but little while did rest,  
 Ere all went helter-skelter back again.  
 They shut the gates against my Master's breast, 115  
 Those enemies of ours, while he outside  
 Turned to me, and with slow steps onward pressed.  
 His eyes he had cast down, his forehead wide  
 Shorn of all boldness, and with sighs he said,  
 "Who hath to me these homes of woe denied?" 120  
 And then to me "Nay, be not thou afraid  
 Because my wrath is hot, I'll win the day,  
 Whatever plans are for resistance made.  
 Not new this haughty malice they display,  
 They tried it once at far less secret door, 125  
 Which ever since without its bolts doth stay  
 Thou saw'st that writing dread the portals o'er.  
 Already thence comes one adown the slope  
 Without an escort, by each circle's shore,  
 Through whom this land a way for us shall ope" 130

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### CANTO IX.

*The Angel-Helper—The Erinyes—Medusa—The Sixth Circle—  
The Hecynarcha.*

THAT hue which coward fear spread o'er my face,  
 Seeing my Leader turn back to the rear,  
 Bade his, to him unwonted, flee apace.  
 Intent he stood, as one who seeks to hear,  
 For the eye failed to throw its glance afar, 5  
 Through the black air and thick mists hovering near  
 "Behoves us still to conquer in this war,"  
 Spake he: "if not . . . such help to us was given . . .  
 Still, till it comes, how slow the moments are!"

<sup>125</sup> As in C. iv. 53, we have the legend of the Gospel of Nicodemus (Part II.) Satan and Hades and their hosts resist the approach of the Crucified One, but He breaks asunder the bars of iron and the gates of Hell give way before Him. So in the Roman office for Easter Eve, "*Hodie portas mortis et seras Salvator noster dirruit*."

<sup>7</sup> The dramatic abruptness of the broken sentences, in which hope and fear alternate, reminds us of the "*Quos ego*" of *Æn.* i. 135. Line 8 alludes, of course, to Beatrice.



Well saw I soon, as he to hide had striven 10  
 His opening speech with what came in the rear,  
 That first and last on different track were driven  
 But none the less in me his speech wrought fear,  
 For I that broken phrase interpreted  
 In sense, perchance, than what he meant more drear 15  
 "Doth ever any down this cavern tread,  
 Coming from that first grade of this dark pit,  
 Where all their pain is but that hope is fled?"  
 Thus asked I, and he spake, "So chances it  
 But seldom one from out our company 20  
 Doth on this path by which I travel fit,  
 True is it, once before, down hither I  
 Journeyed, by that stern Erichtho constrained,  
 Wont souls to summon where their corpses lie.  
 Scarce had my soul from flesh its exit gained, 25  
 When she forced me within these walls to come,  
 To fetch a soul in Judas' pit detained.  
 The lowest region that, and darkest gloom,  
 And furthest from the Heaven that all doth bind  
 Full well I know the road, for trust make room 30  
 Thus fen, which breathes the foul and noisome wind,  
 The city of great sorrows girdeth round,  
 Where without wrath we may not entrance find."  
 More then he said, not now in memory found,  
 For by mine eyes my whole soul drawn had been 35  
 To the high tower with fiery summit crowned,  
 Where in a moment, standing up, were seen  
 Three Furies, hell-bred and of blood-stained hue,  
 Who had the limbs of women and their mien.

<sup>25</sup> No commentator has succeeded in tracing the legend thus referred to. It may have found a place among the floating myths which gathered round the name of Virgil as a magician, and of which we have a sample in Boccaccio's *Commentary*. In Dante's favourite Lucan, (vi 508), Erichtho is a Thessalian sorceress, who, at the request of Sextus Pompeius, before the battle of Pharsalia, calls up a spirit to foretell the issue of the conflict between his father and Cæsar. As the circle of Judas contained also as its chief representatives the souls of Brutus and Cassius, the thought suggested is that Erichtho was employed by some one (Augustus?) to compel Virgil to bring up one of those two murderers of Cæsar to foretell the future.

<sup>30</sup> The Erinyes are described as in *Æn* vi 531, that description coming in its turn from the older Greek myths as represented in *Æsch* *Eumen* 46-56.

Green hydras as their girdle met my view, 40  
 Serpents and horned vipers served for hair,  
 And o'er their temples dread a garland threw ;  
 And he, who knew that they the handmaids were  
 Of the great Queen of endless misery,  
 Said to me, " Lo, the fierce Erinnyes there ! 45  
 Megæra on the left hand meets thine eye,  
 Alecto there stands wailing on the right,  
 Tisiphone between." No more heard I.  
 Each tore her breast with nails in sore despite,  
 Smote with her palms, and cried with such sharp tone, 50  
 That I the poet clasped for very fright.  
 " Let but Medusa come, we'll make him stone,"  
 Upon us looking down thsy all did cry ;  
 " That Theseus went unpunished was ill done "  
 " Turn thyself back, and keep fast closed thine eye, 55  
 For if the Gorgon come, and thou it see,  
 Thou ne'er again shalt reach the world on hugh."  
 So spake my Guide, and with his own hands he  
 Turned me, nor was he with my hands content,  
 But with his own he helped to blindfold me. 60  
 O ye who own a mind intelligent,  
 Admire the wisdom which is here concealed  
 Beneath the veil of rhymes so strangely blent.

<sup>59</sup> Medusa, the Gorgon head that turned whoso looked on it to stone. That, the Furies think, will stop the path of the intruders.

<sup>64</sup> The myth thus alluded to was that Theseus and Perithous went into Hades to bring Proserpine to earth, that the latter was slain by Cerberus, the former kept as a prisoner in the city of Pluto till he was rescued by Hercules. The cry of the Furies is one of regret that they had not made their vengeance more complete. *Mal non vengammo* must not be taken, as some translators and commentators have taken it, as = *non mal*. Dante is rescued from the doom which the Gorgon's head would have brought on him.

<sup>65</sup> The words compel us to see in the scene just described more than a poet's sportive use of the machinery of mythology, and we have to ask what the mystic meaning is which is to be read between the lines. It does not seem far to seek. In entering the city of Dis, the special home of the infidel and heretic, the pilgrim is brought into contact with the mystery of evil and its punishment, in its profoundest depths. The three Ennyes, types of the remorse of conscience (other allegorical and political interpretations have been found for them, as for the three beasts of C 1 which I do not care to discuss), strike terror into the soul, he quails before them. There remains a more terrible experience, the despair and unbelief that petrify the soul and make it callous. The higher human wisdom represented by Virgil protects Dante from that danger by hindering him from looking into the perilous depth of doubt. There is a point at which the contemplation of evil becomes fatal to the soul's life. Victory in that struggle can be obtained only by the help of the grace which comes from above, and of which the heavenly messenger of l 85 is the symbol. We may fairly see in this instance an example of the profounder meanings which Dante read into the ancient myths of Greece, and apply his methods elsewhere.

And now upon the turbid waves there pealed  
 A crash and clang at which I stood aghast, 65  
 That made both shores to trembling movement yield,  
 Not otherwise it was than tempest blast,  
 Impetuous rushing through opposing heat,  
 That smites the forest, sweeping on so fast,  
 It rends the branches, beats them, bears off fleet, 70  
 And in its pride moves on, while dust-clouds dance,  
 And beasts and shepherds drives to seek retreat  
 He oped mine eyes and said, "Now cast thy glance  
 Of vision on that foul and ancient lake,  
 There where the murkiest clouds of smoke advance." 75  
 And as the frogs at sight of hostile snake  
 Are scattered through the waters far and wide,  
 Till, huddling, all the shore their refuge make,  
 More than a thousand ruined souls I spied  
 Thus fleeing from before the face of one, 80  
 Who with dry feet had crossed the Stygian tide  
 He from his face swept that thick air and dun,  
 And often waved his left hand as he went,  
 And with that anguish seemed his strength half-gone.  
 Well I perceived that he from Heaven was sent, 85  
 And to my Master turned, and he made sign  
 That I should silent stand before him bent  
 Ah me ! how full he seemed of scorn divine !  
 He reached the gate, and then, with wand in hand,  
 He oped them, nought withstanding his design. 90  
 "Exiles from heaven, race for ever banned !"  
 So he began, that dreaded threshold o'er,  
 "Whence comes this proud resistance to command ?

<sup>67</sup> A striking parallel is found in Tennyson's *Princess*, in the passage beginning—

"As comes a pillar of electric cloud"

<sup>70</sup> The political interpreters see in the wind the symbol of the Emperor Henry VII., in the shepherds the clergy, and in the wild beasts the lady of Florence, but quæ ?

<sup>76</sup> Frogs, like falcons, seem to have been a favourite study of Dante's. Comp. C. xxxii. 32.

<sup>80</sup> The action of the angel, like that of the Centaur in C. xii. 77, is described by one who has seen, as in the visions of God, what he thus describes. Mystically the action, which reminds us of Æneas with his *fatalis virga* (*Æn.* vi. 409), represents the fact that even the angels of God's grace find the conflict with evil no light or easy task. The political interpreters see in the angel the symbol of the Emperor Henry VII., in the resistance of the demons that which the citizens of Florence offered to that Emperor, in the angel's turning back the Emperor's withdrawal I leave it to those who like to accept such an interpretation. I do not. It assumes of course that C. ix. was not written till after 1312, when the events occurred.

Why at that Will thus kick ye more and more,  
 Whose end ne'er fails its measure to fulfil, 86  
 And oft hath added to your torments sore ?  
 What boots it butting against Fate's strong will ?  
 Your Cerberus, if you remember well,  
 For that bears chin and throat denuded still."  
 Then turned he back on that path foul and fell, 100  
 And spoke no word to us, but had the mien  
 Of one in whom deep cares and carking dwell,  
 All else before him slighted and unseen.  
 We then towards that region took our path,  
 After those holy words, with soul serene. 105  
 We passed within, and met no warring wrath ;  
 And I, who had a strong desire to know  
 The state that such high fortress round it hath,  
 When I had entered, looked around, and lo !  
 I see on every side a wide champaign, 110  
 Filled with sore torments and with bitterest woe  
 As where the Rhone stagnates o'er Arli's plain,  
 Or as at Pola near Quarnaro's shore,  
 Itaha's limit, bordered by the main,  
 With sepulchres the earth is studded o'er, 115  
 So rose they there on every side around,  
 Saving that here the fashion grieved me more ,  
 For flames were scattered o'er each burial mound,  
 Which set them all in such a fiery glow,  
 No art needs more in iron furnace found. 120  
 The lids were hung right o'er the tombs below,  
 And out of them there came such wailings loud,  
 They seemed of men tormented and in woe.

115 Both the passages indicate actual observation. Arles may have been visited on the way to Paris before Dante's exile. Its outskirts, known as the *Alys-champs* (*Champs Alysés*), and used as a public promenade, form a vast necropolis, with long rows of Roman tombs on each side of an avenue (Joanne, *s v Arles*). Boccaccio speaks of a local tradition that there had been a great fight in the neighbourhood between the Christians and Saracens. Another more definite story was that Charlemagne had buried his dead there after a battle (Turpin, *Hist Charles the Great*, i. 52), while a third legend stated that the Christian dead were distinguished by miracle from the unbelievers, and were found in their tombs, each with his name carved on that in which he lay (*Scart*). Pola, a city of Istria, on the Gulf of Quarnero, in the north of the Adriatic, was also memorable for the number of tombs, upwards of 700, in its outskirts. It was known as the limit of Italy, and contained an Amphitheatre, the *Porta Aurea*, and other Roman remains. Augustus had wished it to be called *Pietas Julia*, but the old name kept its ground (Ramp *s v Pola*).

And I: "O Master, who then are that crowd  
 Who in these tombs thus sepulchred appear, 125  
 Whose sighs we hear as if in deep grief bowed?"  
 And he to me: "Heresiarchs are they here,  
 With followers of all sects, more numerous race  
 Than thou wouldst deem, the laden tombstones bear  
 Here like with like still finds its burial-place, 130  
 Some monuments more heated, others less."  
 And when he to the right had turned a space,  
 We passed where high towers on the tortures press.

### CANTO X.

*The Epicureans—Farnata degli Uberti—Cavalcante de' Cavalcanti*

THEN onward goes, by narrow path that wound  
 Between the city's wall and tortured race,  
 My Master first, and I behind him found  
 "O highest Might, who through each godless space," 5  
 I then began, "as thou wilt, turnest me;  
 Speak to me, grant my longings, of thy grace.  
 The race who in these vaults sepulchral be,  
 May they be known? already lifted high  
 Are all the lids, yet none on guard I see"  
 And he to me. "All of them closed shall lie 10  
 When from Jehoshaphat's dread vale they come,  
 Each with the body left beneath the sky  
 On this side see, there lie within the tomb  
 All those who Epicurus take as guide,  
 Who make the spirit share the body's doom. 15

<sup>127</sup> The form of punishment is again appropriate. The heresiarch's life is but a living death, and therefore he is fitly entombed. But that death is not the cessation of conscious being, only of all that makes life worthy to be lived.

<sup>1</sup> The scene which we have to picture to ourselves is that of a great cemetery just within the city, dark as night, and the flames issuing from the red hot sepulchres. A midnight walk through the "Black Country" of the Midlands would in part reproduce it.

<sup>11</sup> Mediaeval interpretation fastened on *Isaiah* 2, and drew the inference that the valley of Jehoshaphat (= Jehovah's judgment), on the south side of Jerusalem, would be the actual scene of a localised last judgment.

<sup>14</sup> There is something singularly suggestive in the followers of Epicurus being placed among the heresiarchs. Dante clearly has in his mind, not the Athenian philosopher (though in

But thy desire shall soon be satisfied,  
 Both this which thou to me hast thus revealed,  
 And that thy wish thou dost in silence hide "  
 And I: " Good Master, I but keep concealed  
 From thee my heart, lest I speak more than meet,      20  
 Not now alone hast thou my lips kept sealed."  
 " O Tuscan, who this city's fiery heat  
 Dost traverse with thy speech of courteous tone,  
 A little while stay with me, I entreat.  
 Thy speech and action have full plainly shown      25  
 Thou art a native of that noble land  
 To which perchance I was too troublous known "  
 All on a sudden came, as near at hand,  
 That voice from out a tomb, and so I turned  
 In dread, that I more near my Guide might stand.      30  
 Then he to me: " Turn back: why thus concerned?  
 'Tis Farinata whom thou see'st upraised,  
 From his waist up his form is now discerned."  
 Already had I on him closely gazed,  
 And he with breast and neck before me rose,      35  
 As though in scorn Hell was by him appraised.  
 And then my Guide's hand, prompt and active, chose  
 To bid me to him 'mid the gravestones come,  
 Saying, " Let clear words now thy wish disclose."

one sense, as the founder of a school that wandered from the truth revealed to all men, he might be described by that name), but those who, being within the pale of the Church, had fallen back into pagan scepticism or unbelief. The way in which he looked on the Renaissance under Frederick II, against whom the charge of being "an Epicurean" was freely brought by his Papal opponents (*Kingdon*, i. 371, 432, ii. 365), shows how he would have looked on the later Renaissance, the revival, *i. e.*, of heathenism in philosophy and art, under the Medici. The negation of immortality is that which seems to the poet a more deadly heresy than that of Arius or Sabellius.

<sup>25</sup> The speaker, as l. 32 shows, is Farinata degli Uberti, a Ghibelline noble, who, in alliance with Arezzo, Pisa, and other partisans of the Empire, defeated the Guelphs of Florence, and among them Dante's kindred, in the battle of Montaperti, near the river Arbia, in 1260. Assuming that it is right for any human judgment to anticipate the Divine sentence, nothing can be more striking than the absence of partisanship and personal feeling with which in this instance Dante awards the doom of Farinata. The poet of Ghibellinism places a Ghibelline in the circle of the heretics. In no other way, it may have seemed to him, could he teach the living Ghibellines with whom he associated that something more was needed for their salvation than hostility to the Pope. That hostility might be accompanied, as it had been in Farinata and others, under the influence of the imperial court of Frederick II, with a loss of all that raises man's life above the brutes with a denial, not of this or that article of the Church's faith but of the fundamental idea of all natural religion. Boccaccio describes Farinata as being both an epicurean, and, in the more modern sense of the word, an epicure. That he was not without some nobler qualities which yet were unable to save, Dante, as the sequel shows, was not slow to recognise (comp. also C. vi. 79). It adds to the strange weird interest of the scene that Lapo, the son of Farinata, was a poet, and probably a friend of Dante's (*Sonn.* ii., *V. E.* l. 13), that his grandson Bonifazio wrote a poem, with the title of

Soon as I reached the foot of his high tomb, 40  
 He looked at me awhile with scornful eye,  
 And asked me, "Whom art thou descended from?"  
 And I, who was all eager to comply,  
 Kept nothing from him, but the whole truth told;  
 Whereat he arched his eyebrows somewhat high, 45  
 And said, "Fierce foes were they in days of old  
 To me, my fathers and my party too,  
 So that twice o'er I drove them from our fold"  
 "If they were banished, they the way back knew,"  
 I answered, "once and twice from every side 50  
 Thine have not learnt that art in measure due."  
 Then there arose a spectre just descried,  
 Uncovered downward only to the chin;  
 Kneeling, I throw, to lift himself he tried;

*Dittamondo*, a kind of itinerary of the then known world, based, in its form, on the pattern of the *Commedia* (see note on C. v. 67), and that his daughter was married to Guido Cavalcante. The fact that Margaritone of Arezzo executed a crucifix for him stands in almost ghastly contrast with Dante's picture (*Vas* 1. 90).

<sup>40</sup> The question is asked in the very spirit of the feudal, the Ghibelline, noble. To him the Guelphs, belonging mostly to the traders and the men of the professions, were objects of scorn. We can hardly doubt that Dante had encountered such scorn, and that the iron had entered into his soul, as he represents it here. In *Par* xvii he tells, with a natural pride, the story of his own lineage, but the proud noble was not likely to think much of Cacciaguida. Comp the story of Giotto's asking the same question of a sister who wished to be painted with a coat of arms (*Vas* 1. 121).

<sup>45</sup> The words refer to the two expulsions of the Guelphs of Florence by the Ghibellines. (1) in 1248, when they were driven into exile by Frederick II (*Vill* vi. 34), (2) in 1260, after Montapert, as above. Dante's father was involved in the latter, but his mother, if not his father also, must have returned to Florence before his birth in 1265. In both cases, as Dante boasts, the exile was but short, the Guelphs returning from the first in 1250, after the rout of the Ghibellines at Fighine, and from the second in 1266, after the death of Manfred. They in their turn, relying on the support of Charles of Anjou, banished their enemies (*Farinata* had died in 1264), and in the partial amnesty of 1267 the Uberti were specially exempted. The taunt was probably written after Dante had taken part in one or more attempts of the Ghibelline Bianchi, during the early years of his exile, to force their way back to Florence, and not without a touch of bitterness at their failure.

<sup>50</sup> The mention of "Guido" in l. 63 identifies the spectre with Cavalcante Cavalcanti, the father of Guido, one of the poet's earliest and dearest associates, the "first of his friends" (*V N* c. 3), a poet like himself, noble, brave, thoughtful, and refined (*Vill* viii. 41. *Dino Comp* 1). The two had been as David and Jonathan. Guido's father wonders at seeing Dante without him. And now the one speaks of the other after his death (Guido died in the autumn of 1300 after the assumed date of the vision, but before any of it was written) in a tone of coldness, and places his father in Hell as an unbeliever. What had caused the breach? If it is impossible to construct a complete *apologia*, we may at least trace the workings of the poet's mind. The father was a materialist, an "epicurean," and the son may have seemed to have caught something of the taint. His marriage with *Farinata*'s daughter would tend in the same direction. When Virgil came to be to Dante the guide to a higher life, to a truer theory of the Divine government, Guido, it may be, would none of him, and the breach between the two friends was therefore something more than a quarrel on a point of taste, Guido preferring the Provencal poets to the author of the *Aeneid*. The change has its parallel in the altered feelings, let us say, with which a convert to or from Romanism or Protestantism looks on the friends whom he has left. What adds to the pain with which we read the whole story is, that Dante, in the two months in which he held office as one of the Priors in 1300, had felt himself compelled to banish Guido and others, both Neri and Bianchi, as disturbers of the peace of Florence, to Sarzana, that his friend caught a fever there, and died in the autumn of the same year. Comp *Purg* xl. 97, as possibly alluding to him.

Round about me he looked, as if to win  
 Assurance whether others were with me ;  
 But when his anxious doubt all spent had been,  
 Then spake he weeping " If 'tis thine to see  
 This prison dark, through loftiness of mind,  
 Where is my son ? Why comes he not with thee ?" 60  
 And I " Not of myself the path I find ;  
 He who waits yonder leads me on my way.  
 May be, your Guido to his worth was blind."  
 Those words of his and doom that on him lay  
 Had of that soul already told the name, 65  
 Therefore so full did I my answer say.  
 Then swiftly rising up, he 'gan exclaim,  
 " 'Was' didst thou say ? And lives he then no more ?  
 Are his eyes closed against the sun's sweet flame ?"  
 And when he noticed that I lingered o'er 70  
 My answer, back he fell as stupefied,  
 And his face hid, as it was hid before.  
 But he, that other, lofty in his pride,  
 For whom I stayed there, did unchanged remain ,  
 Neither his neck he moved, nor bent his side. 75  
 " And if," then taking up his former strain,  
 He said, " they have that art so ill applied,  
 That more torments me than this bed of pain.  
 But, ere is kindled for the fiftieth tide  
 The bright face of the Queen who ruleth here, 80  
 How hard that art is thou too shalt have tried.  
 And if in that sweet world thou would'st appear,  
 Tell me why still that people is so stern  
 In every law against my lineage there ?"

<sup>72</sup> The anguish of the father at hearing, as he thought, of his son's death, his loss of the "sweet light" of earth, reminds us of the rich man's anxiety in *Luke* xvi. 28 lest his brethren "should come into this place of torment."

<sup>73</sup> The fierce pride of the noble is not moved by the agony of his fellow sufferer, he is simply absorbed, in the selfishness which epicureanism brings with it, in the shame of the hopeless exile of his descendants. He in his turn uses the foresight given to the damoed (l. 97-108) to prophesy Dante's own exile within fifty months (the "Queen" = Proserpine = Hecate = the moon) from the date of the vision, i.e., before 1304. Dante was exiled in January 1302. Two years more would teach him that it was not easy to return. Possibly the precise date may have been connected with some other fact, such as the attempt of the Cardinal da Prato to effect a peace between the Banchi and Neri, in April 1304, the bearing of which on Dante's fortunes is now not clear.

<sup>82</sup> The Uberti were excluded by name in every edict of amnesty. As Dante answers, the slaughter of Mootaperti was a thing never to be forgotten. The "prayers" refer either to



And I: "The carnage fierce that made them turn,      85  
     And bade the Arbia flow with crimsoned tide,  
     Makes them such prayers in our temple learn."  
 And when he shook his head, and therewith sighed,  
     "In that I stood not by myself," he said,  
     "Nor without cause with others took my side ;      90  
 But by myself I stood when all were led  
     To bid Firenze's name and history cease,  
     And I in her defence raised dauntless head "  
 "Ah," prayed I, "by thy children's hopes of peace,  
     Do thou that dim perplexity make clear,      95  
     Which wraps my halting judgment, ill at ease.  
 It seems that ye foresee, if right I hear,  
     What things, as time moves onward, shall arise,  
     And hold another course with things full near "  
 "We see," he said, "as one who hath dim eyes,      100  
     The things which yet are in the distance far,  
     Such light the Sovran King to us supplies,  
 But their approach or presence straight doth mar  
     Perception, and, unless by others told,  
     We nothing know how human fortunes are '      105  
 So thou may'st comprehend how dead and cold  
     Will be our knowledge from the self-same hour  
     When close the doors that now the future hold "

actual litames against the plots of the Uberti, or more probably to the decrees against them, which are so named in irony, as being passed by public assemblies held in the Church of St John the Baptist. So Farinata's grandson, dwelling on his noble defence of Florence, pathetically adds—

"It is a marvel and a grief to me  
     To find its citizen so hard and stern  
     To children's children in the fourth degree"—*Fas* 11 28

91 Dante, at least had not forgotten what half redeemed the character of the haughty un-believing noble. The Ghibelline allies, the Pisans, the Siennese, the Gualdi, the Uberti, met in council at Empoli after Montaperti. They were all ready to vote for the destruction of the Guelph democratic Florence. Farinata alone, in the spirit of one who after all, loved his city more than his party, resisted and averted her destruction. *Comp. Sim. Rep. Ital.* 11 245-248.

100 We come across a curious speculation as to the mental activities of the dead. Ciaccio and Farinata foretell the future. Cavalcante is ignorant of the present. What is the solution of the problem? That which is offered here seems to be that the souls of the departed, being no longer in contact with the world of sense, receive no knowledge of what is passing in it, but that, as spiritual beings, they trace, as long as time holds its course, the events that are passing from the sphere of the Divine foreknowledge into that of actuality. When time shall end, i.e., at the last Judgment, as the close of the great æon, there will be no future events, and their knowledge will be limited to their own Eternal Now. So Aquinas limits the knowledge of the disembodied soul to *futura et universalia*. The Dante of the vision feels, in such a case, as he would have felt in the world, and apologises for the error which had misled him.

Then I, as one who felt compunction's power,  
 Said, "Tell, I pray thee, him who there doth lie 110  
 That still with us his son shares life's sweet dower,  
 And if till now I mute was to reply,  
 Say it was only that my thoughts were still  
 Entangled in that knot thy words untie."  
 And now, called back by my dear Master's will, 115  
 I prayed that spirit with more eager prayer  
 To tell me who with him that space did fill.  
 "More than a thousand," said he, "with me fare;  
 Within there Frederick, second of the name,  
 The Cardinal, and others whom I spare." 120  
 Then was he hid, and to that bard of fame  
 I turned my steps, revolving in my mind  
 That saying, which to me as hostile came.  
 He turned, and as he went, to me behind  
 He said, "Why art thou so disquieted?" 125  
 And I, as he had asked, the cause assigned.  
 "Let thy mind store what was against thee said,"  
 So spake my Master wise. "Now hear thou this,"  
 With lifted finger pointing on ahead,  
 "When thou shalt be before that light of bliss 130  
 Of her whose beauteous eye doth all survey,  
 Thy life's true journey then thou shalt not miss."

113 The words bear witness to the existence, even prior to the later Renaissance, of a far larger spread of unbelief than we commonly associate with the 13th century. The *Monum. Franc.* (Apt. p. 634), which reports discussions among philosophical students *utrum sit Deus?* tell a like tale. Foremost among the sceptics was the Emperor, who is here named, the enemy not only of the Papacy, but of the faith of Christians. Popular legend connected his name with the saying, "*De tribus impostoribus*" (the three being Moses, Christ, Mahomet), and his court at Palermo was conspicuous for the laxity both of its faith and morals. As a Ghibelline partisan Dante might have glossed over the faults of an emperor whom he admired as a ruler, a patron of learning and a poet (*V. E.* i. 12), and e-a-sed among those "*humana seruit, brutalia dedignantur*." As a Catholic, a Christian, and a man, he was constrained to hold him up to eternal infamy. See *Kington*, l. 476, ii. 123. *Church*, p. 119. Comp. *C. xiii.* 59, *Purg.* iii. 113, *Malisp.* c. 107.

120 'The Cardinal, so spoken of *per excellence*, was Ottaviano degli Ubaldini, a contemporary of Farinata. He too was a Ghibelline, rich, powerful, luxurious. He had made a great feast after the defeat of the Florentine Guelphs at Montaperti. Like others, he had caught the taint of epicureanism, and was reported to have said that if man had a soul, he had lost his in the service of his party (*Malisp.* c. 103, *Kington*, ii. 434). He took his place also among the early writers of Italian poetry, and was notorious for his luxury and license.

130 The light of bliss is, of course, Beatrice. The poet's plan seems, however, to have changed as he went on, and, as a matter of fact, he hears the story of his life from Cacciaguida, to whom she leads him (see *Pur.* xv. 7-30, where he refers to the grievous words of the present Canto).

Then turned he to the left from that our way ;  
 We left the wall, and to the middle wound,  
 By path that to a valley down doth stray, 135  
 Whence spread a foul and sickening stench around.

## CANTO XI.

### *The Hierarchy—Anastasius II—Classification of Sins.*

UPON the margin of a bank raised high,  
 Formed of great piles of broken rocks around,  
 We found a throng in yet worse misery ,  
 And there, because that dread abyss profound  
 Sent forth its stench o'erwhelming far and wide, 5  
 A refuge we behind the cover found  
 Of a great tomb, where I a scroll descried,  
 Which said, "Pope Anastasius here I hold,  
 Whom from true path Photinus drew aside."  
 "Slowly our course adown the vale we hold, 10  
 Till that our sense a little trained hath grown  
 To that foul blast , then use will make us bold "  
 The Master thus , and I spake . "This alone  
 I ask, find some amends that time pass by  
 Not lost " And he . "Thou see'st I think thereon. 15

1-10 The valley into which the pilgrims descend is still part of the circle of the heretics. The stigma of heresy that attached to the name of Anastasius II (*d* 498) was connected with the question whether the name of Acacius, the Monophysite Bishop of Constantinople, should be struck out of the dyptychs of the Greek Church as tainted with the heresy of Sabellius, as had been urged by his predecessor, Felix. The Pope formally presented a like request to the Emperor, also an Anastasius, but gave way on his refusal, and was content with the thought that Felix and Acacius were both before the tribunal of the Supreme Judge. The suspicion of heresy roused by this temporising policy was aggravated by his intercourse with Photinus, not the more conspicuous Sabellian of that name, who died in 376, but a deacon of Thessalonica who was identified with the errors of Acacius. According to the traditions which were current in Dante's time, his life was cut short by a sudden death, like that of Arius in its circumstances, which was looked on as a Divine judgment (*Milman, L. C.* 349, and *Chron. of Poland*, quoted by *Scart.* and *D. C. B.* v).

11 The request forms the starting point for one of the episodes of theological ethics which occupy so prominent a place in the scheme of the *Commedia*. Dante seeks, as it were, to popularise the teaching of Aquinas, in which he himself had found light and guidance. He and his Guide are about to enter the circles of those who have sinned in other ways than that of carnal lust, or prodigality, or avarice, or direct heresy. The whole lecture that follows is an introduction to the three circles which are next to be visited, a dissertation on the different kinds and degrees of evil which are punished in them, the seventh, of sins of violence, the eighth, of the fraudulent, with its ten sub-circles of varied evil, the ninth, of the traitors. This seemed, as I so shows, a more convenient method than that of a separate instruction at each circle. It is based, as Ozanam shows (p. 231), upon the teaching of Aquinas (*Summa* i. qu. 84), as that in its turn was based upon the *Ethics* of Aristotle and the *Magna Moralia* of Gregory the Great (xxxii. 31). In the *Purg.* we have the more popular "seven sins" of the Church's system of Penance (*Witte, D. F.* ii. 121).

My son, within these stones that broken lie  
 Three circles are there," he began to tell ;  
 " From grade to grade, like those thou leav'st on high ,  
 Filled full are they of spirits doomed to Hell.  
 But that henceforth it may suffice to see, 20  
 Hear how and why they lie in bondage fell.  
 In every sin that earns Heaven's enmity,  
 Men aim at wronging others, and that aim  
 By force or fraud works out the injury  
 But because fraud is man's peculiar blame, 25  
 God hates it more, and therefore lower stand  
 The fraudulent, and suffer greater shame.  
 The outer circle holds the fiercer band ,  
 But because force is threefold in its kind,  
 In threefold circles it is built and planned. 30  
 In God, ourselves, our neighbour, we may find  
 The wronged in person, or in what they own,  
 As thou shalt hear with cause full clear assigned.  
 Or death or grievous wounds in malice done,  
 Are 'gainst our neighbour's self , against his right 35  
 Are rapine, arson, foul extortion  
 Hence murderers, and those who wound in spite,  
 Robbers and brigands, these, in torments all,  
 In the first round find each a separate site  
 Again, man's force upon himself may fall, 40  
 Or on his goods , so in the second round  
 Remorse that profits not must him enthrall  
 Who of your world to rob himself is found,  
 Or gambles, or doth squander all he hath,  
 Or murmurs, where contentment should abound. 45  
 Force also against God may work in wrath,  
 When men in heart blaspheme Him or deny,  
 Or swerve from Nature and her bounteous path.  
 Wherefore within the smallest circle lie  
 Cahors and Sodoni, marked with brand of shame, 50  
 And he who with his heart speaks blasphemy.

<sup>36</sup> The Italian for " extortion," *sollette* (tribute, tax), deserves a passing note as connected probably with the German *Toll*, and finding its way into Italian from the oppressive rule of the German emperors. *Tolle* has, however, been suggested as a possible derivation. A *v l* gives *collette*, a word with the same meaning, but of Latin derivation.

<sup>50</sup> Cahors, a city of France in the department of Lot, seems in the 13th century to have

Fraud, that in every conscience worketh blame,  
 A man may work on him who gives him trust,  
 Or one who sees no ground to grant that same.  
 This latter mode but so far seems unjust 55  
 That it the natural bond of friendship breaks,  
 So in the second circle here are thrust  
 The hypocrites, the flatterers, he who takes  
 Men's souls with spells, the thief, the simonist,  
 Sin's filthiest brood, corrupters, pimps, and rakes. 60  
 But by the other mode that love is missed  
 Which Nature works, and that which with it blends,  
 And these a special confidence enlist  
 Hence in the smallest circle that descends  
 To the world's centre, where Dis holds his throne, 65  
 Such traitors lie in woe that never ends."  
 And I: "O Master, clear enough is shown  
 Thy reasoning, and distinguishes aright  
 This pit and all it claimeth as its own.  
 But tell me, those within the lake's foul plight, 70  
 Whom the wind drives and whom the rainstorms beat,  
 And those who clash with words of sharpest spite,  
 Why dwell they not within this fiery seat,  
 Here punished, if beneath God's wrath they bide?  
 If not, why then such treatment do they meet?" 75

been the centre of banking operations on the part of the Fuggers or Rothschilds of the time, who had an evil repute as usurers. Even in England, kings, prelates, and nobles were in their clutches. The name of Caorsine had become proverbially identified with "usurer" (Matt. *Par ad* 1235, Bocc *Com* Ducange, s. v). In John xxii (1236) it gave Western Christendom a Pontiff stained with its characteristic vice (*Par* xxvii 58). The *rationale* of the combination of those of Cahors with the sin of the Cities of the Plain is given in ll 109-111. For the circles of the violent we have: 1. The violent against others (C. xii), 2. against themselves (C. xiii), 3. against God (C. xiv), 4. against Nature (C. xv, xvi), and 5. against art (C. xvi). The fraudulent occupy in an ever-descending scale the ten pits of the Malebolge: 1. The seducers and panders (C. xvii), 2. the flatterers (C. xviii), the simoniacs (C. xix), the soothsayers (C. xx), 3. the speculators (C. xxi), 4. the hypocrites (C. xxii), 5. the thieves (C. xxiii, xxv), 6. the evil counsellors (C. xxvi, xxvii), 7. the schismatics (C. xxviii), 8. to alchemists and forgers (C. xxix, xxx). Lastly, in the ninth circle we have: 1. Caina, for traitors to their kindred, 2. Antenora, for traitors to their country (C. xxxi), 3. Protonotara, for traitors to their friends (C. xxxii), 4. Gudecca, for traitors to their lords, the smallest and last of all the circles (C. xxxiv).

<sup>70</sup> The poet states for others, and in order that he may solve it, a problem which had weighed on his own mind. Why were the sins of lust, the sins of Italian and Franceca, and those of avarice and prodigality, in the higher circles, and not in those on which he was about to enter? He has found the solution in the law of habits set forth by Aristotle (*Eth Nicom* vii 1), which classifies characters according to the degree of the hold the evil has on them: (1) *akrasia*, incontinence, i.e., the want of self control; (2) *enesis*, the state in which there is no longer any inner power to restrain or punish passion; (3) *duplosia*, the brute-like state into which (2) ultimately develops itself. Latin's *lesoro*, vi 37, gives the classification which we find here. The works of Aristotle had been known in Bologna through Latin translations from the Arabic versions of Averroes, whose "great comment" is

And he to me: "Oh, why thus turns aside  
 Thy wit to folly, as it never used?  
 Why to false issues is thy mind applied?  
 Dost not remember what thou hast perused,  
 The very words with which thine Ethics treat 80  
 The threefold moods which stand of Heaven accused,—  
 Unbridled will, fixed evil, last we meet  
 Brutal excess, and how the unbridled will,  
 God, blaming less, with fewer stripes doth beat?  
 If thou this teaching but considerest still, 85  
 And call to thy remembrance who they are  
 Who higher up their penance dire fulfil,  
 Then thou wilt see why they are stationed far  
 From these offenders, why with torment less  
 The righteous strokes of God have power to mar." 90  
 "O Sun, who dost dim sight with healing bless,  
 Thou, when thou teachest, giv'st me such content,  
 That doubt and knowledge bring like happiness.  
 Once more," said I, "let thy glance back be bent,  
 There where thou said'st that usury offends 95  
 God's goodness; now untie that knot's intent."  
 "Whoso," he said, "to Wisdom high attends,  
 Learns evermore, not here or there alone,  
 How Nature takes its methods and its ends  
 From God, whose Mind in skill and art is shown; 100  
 And if thou hast thy Physics well in mind,  
 Thou'lt find, ere many pages thou hast known,

mentioned in C. iv. 144, and there probably, or through Brunetto, Dante studied it. Taught by him, he learnt to distinguish between the sins of impulsive sense, of inveterate habit, and of embroiled callousness.

<sup>84</sup> Another question presents itself. In what sense is usury (the term, it will be remembered, as throughout the teaching of Scripture, included *all* interest on money, whatever its amount) rightly classed as a sin against Nature? Here the answer is found not in the *Ethics*, but in the *Physics* (ii. 2) of Aristotle, that also had probably entered into his Bologna studies. The argument stands thus: True art, the art of man's labour in acquiring wealth, follows Nature, as Nature follows God. The natural law is stated in *Gen.* ii. 25. Man is to "eat bread in the sweat of his brow." Whatever gives man bread without labour, as interest on invested capital gives it, is against that law, "takes another way." Such, at any rate, was the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ.* ii. 2, *qm.* 78) as well as of Dante. I do not discuss its soundness, and political economy, as a science, comes to a quite different conclusion. It is worth noting, however, (1) that Calvin was the first theologian of eminence who maintained the lawfulness of interest, (2) that Selden speaks of the teaching of Anglican divines as being on the other side (*Table-talk*, s. v. Usury), and (3) that Dante's doctrine has recently been revived, with all his wonted power of diction, by Mr. Ruskin (*Usury and the English Bishops*, 1885).

Your Art, as far as may be, close behind  
 Follows, as scholars near their teacher tread;  
 So in your Art we may God's grandchild find. 105  
 By these two powers, if thou hast rightly read  
 The opening lore of Genesis, 'tis meet  
 The nations should in life's true course be led,  
 And since elsewhere the usurer turns his feet,  
 Nature herself, and in her follower too, 110  
 He scorns, since elsewhere he his hope doth seat  
 But follow now, for I would fain pursue  
 My course . the Fishes with the horizon blend,  
 Full over Caurus comes the Wain in view,  
 And far out yonder see the crags descend. 115

## CANTO XII.

*The Minotaur—The Seventh Circle—Sins of Violence—The Centaurs—  
 The Tyrants*

THE place where down the bank our way we took  
 Was alp-like, and the view that met us there,  
 Such that for fear each eye away would look.  
 So doth that ruin beyond Tient appear,  
 Which on the flank into the Adige dashed, 5  
 Through earthquake or through prop that failed to bear,

115 Of all the problems of the *Commedia*, those presented by such notices of time as this are among the most difficult to explain, and, except to the student of astronomy, the least interesting. It will, I think, be enough to state that the constellation known as the Fishes was in part below the horizon, as they would be at early dawn at the date of the Easter of 1300, when the sun was in Aries, that the Wain is the Charley's Wain (churl's or peasant's wain or waggon) of English speech, the *Ursa Major* of astronomers, that Caurus, as the Latin name for the north-west wind, indicates the western quarter of the heaven. All this seems a complicated way of describing daybreak on the morning of Easter Eve, but Dante, like Milton, was fond of showing that the poet could also be a man of science (*P. L.* viii 1-150). Lubin, however, takes *Corv* as the name of one of the stars of the Great Bear.

<sup>5</sup> The scene referred to is probably that of the landslip known as the *Slavin* (= *precipice*) *di Marco* in the gorge of the Chiusa running from the Adige across the slopes of Mount Pastello. The landslip is described in the *History of Verona* by Della Corte as having happened in 1309, without either earthquake or tempest. The date makes it probable that Dante was at Verona at the time, and that the passage, if not the whole Canto, was written subsequently. One pictures the student-poet clambering down the steep descent, not without difficulty, and perhaps some fear, and its horrors reproduce themselves in his vision of Hell. Comp. *Ilare* i 302.

For from the mountain-top whence down it crashed  
     E'en to the plain the rock so falls away,  
     That one above might climb o'er stones detached.  
 Such down that steep abyss was then our way;      10  
     And on the border of that break i' th' earth  
     The infamy of Crete extended lay,  
 Who from the false cow drew his monstrous birth;  
     And when he saw us, straight himself he bit,  
     As one all racked within by fiercest wrath      15  
 My Sage towards him shouted, " Seemeth it,  
     Perchance, that thou the Athenian Duke dost see,  
     Who sent thee from yon world to death's dark pit?  
 Avaunt, thou monster! not instructed he  
     By thy fair sister, now descends this way,      20  
     But comes to see your forms of penalty "  
 And as a bull, when comes the hour to slay,  
     Breaks loose as he receives the deadly wound,  
     And cannot walk, but wildly bounds away,  
 So in the Minotaur like act I found      25  
     And he, when ware of it, cried, " On apace,  
     To the outlet, while he rages, get thee round."  
 So down the broken bank our way we trace,  
     Over the rocks that slipped at our advance  
     At the new load my feet did on them place.      30  
 I moved on, plunged in thought, and he: " Perchance,  
     Thou thinkest on this ruin where doth stand,  
     As guard, that brute whose wrath quailed at my glance  
 Now 'tis my wish that thou shouldst understand,  
     That when I erst came down to this deep Hell,      35  
     This rock had not thus fallen o'er the land

<sup>12</sup> The "infamy of Crete" is, as in l 25, the Minotaur, whose story hardly needs telling. The Athenian Duke is Theseus, one of whose earliest feats was the slaughter of the monster. The sister was Ariadne, who loved Theseus, and gave him the clue by which to thread his way through the labyrinth in which the monster had his home. The monster form is the fit guardian of the circle of those who have allowed the brute element in them to overpower the human.

<sup>20</sup> The "new load" is the living form that now passed over the rocks which had hitherto been trodden only by the spectral shadows of the dead.

<sup>35</sup> The journey referred to is that of C. ix 22, which was before the Crucifixion. The earthquake just before the descent into Hell was that of Matt xxvii 51, and is represented as having affected even the depths of the Inferno.





Then touched he me and said, "See Nessus here,  
 Who for the beauteous Deianira bled,  
 And for himself wrought vengeance dire and drear.  
 He in the midst, who breastward bends his head, 70  
 Is Chiron great, who did Achilles train ;  
 The other Pholus, filled with anger dread.  
 Thousands the fosse skirt, thousands yet again,  
 Shooting at every soul that lifts its frame,  
 More than his guilt fits, from that blood-stream's stain " 75  
 We to those swift-paced monsters nearer came,  
 And Chiron took a dart, and then he drew  
 Behind his jaws his beard back with the same ;  
 And when his great mouth bare appeared in view,  
 He said to his companions, "Do ye see 80  
 That he behind, in touching, moveth too ?  
 Not so a dead man's steps are wont to be."  
 And my good Guide, who now had reached the breast,  
 Where the two natures met in unity,  
 Answered, "He lives indeed, 'tis my behest 85  
 To show to him alone this valley drear,  
 Not for delight, but by high fate imprest.  
 For One hath ceased her Alleluia clear  
 Who this new office hath to me assigned :  
 No robber he, nor felon stand I here, 90  
 But, by that Power through whose protection kind  
 My footsteps move along this pathway fell,  
 Give us a guide, whom we may near us find,

(Hom. *Il.* xi. 832), the least brutalised, who trained Achilles to heroic deeds, Æsculapius in the art of medicine. Nessus, led to outrage by his passion for Deianira, gave her the garment, envenomed by his own blood, which caused the death of Hercules, and formed the subject of the *Irackinian Maidens* of Sophocles. Pholus was related to have interrupted the wedding feast of Peirithous and Hippodamia in the fierce violence of lust (*Purg.* xxiv. 121). In each of the three, Dante, we may believe, saw the type of the various degrees of deepening evil which come when the brute nature mars the completeness of the human life, beginning with half genial animation and passing on into sheer ferocity (Ruskin, *R. C.* xlii. 8-24). So the Centaur appears in Giotto's "Obedience" fresco at Assisi.

<sup>77</sup> Ruskin's note on this passage, as showing that what Dante wrote was not, as with second rate artists, the work of a deliberate invention, but the description of what he had actually seen, as in the visions of the night, is eminently characteristic (*M. P.* iii. 83).

<sup>85</sup> The reader will remember the parallels as to the poet's mission in *C. iii.* 94, *iv.* 94. The general kindness of the Centaurs, and specially of Chiron, seems to embody the thought that where the union of the man with the brute (*as & c.* in the case of savage races 'who know not their Lord's will') is not the result of choice, there are capacities for good which may make them willing instruments, alike for the punishment of evil and the help of good. There is not a real *Empyrea* (= brutality), as a brutalised humanity is. (*Comp. C.* xi. 82, Arist. *Eth.* vii. 5.)

<sup>86</sup> The "one" = Beatrice.

To show us where the stream is fordable,  
 One on whose back this man may sit astride ; 95  
 No spirit he, through air to travel well "

Then Chiron turned towards his right-hand side,  
 And said to Nessus, "Take thou them, and lead .  
 If others check thee, bid them turn aside."

We then with trusty escort straight proceed 100  
 Along the edge of that red boiling stream,  
 Wherein those seething wailed each guilty deed.  
 Sunk to the eyebrows some of them did seem,  
 And the great Centaur said, "The tyrants these,  
 Who plunged in blood and rapine's worst extreme " 105

Their ruthless deeds they wail here, ill at ease  
 See Alexander, Dionysius there,  
 Who vexed Sicilia with long cruelties.  
 That forehead there, o'erhung with swarthy hair,  
 Is Azzolino, and that other head 110  
 Is Obizzo of Esti's visage fair,  
 Whose blood on earth was by his stepson shed "

Then turned I to the Poet and he spake,  
 "Let him before thee, I behind thee, tread "

Soon as we walked, I saw the Centaur make 115  
 A halt hard by a race that plunged were shown  
 To the throat, then rose from out that bubbling lake

<sup>107</sup> The list of the tyrants of earth who are singled out from among thousands as types is interesting as furnishing data for a study of Dante's historical sympathies. (1) Alexander is probably not the Macedonian conqueror, but the Thessalian tyrant of Pheræ. Of the former Dante speaks elsewhere as "approaching to the type of a true universal monarchy" (*Mon* ii 9), as worthy of honour for his deeds of kingly goodness (*Conv* iv 11). On the other hand, Dante may have changed his estimate, and been influenced by his favourite, Lucan who speaks (*Phars* x 19) of Alexander as the "proles vesana Philippi," and as a "felix prodo." (2) Dionysius the elder, tyrant of Syracuse, who oppressed Sicily B.C. 408-367. The "loose cruelties," lit "grievous years," reads like an echo of the "tristes ædibus edidit annos" of Statius, another of Dante's favourite poets (*Achill* i 80). (3) Arrolino (or Arruelin) da Romano, tyrant of the Marca Trevigiana and Lombardy from 1230-60. Here also Dante condemns a Ghibelline. Lazzelin was son in law of Frederick II., and ruled his province as an Imperial vicar. Of all the tyrants of that evil time, Arruelin, known in popular legend as the Child of the Devil, was the most steeped in cruelties. Sismondi shrinks from telling the tale of his rapacity, his massacres, his fiendish tortures of his enemies. And his death was the fit close of such a life. Wounded and taken captive on his way to attack Milan, he was imprisoned at Sorzano, refused all food and medical aid, and for eleven days in gloomy silence, tore the bandages from his wound, and died (*Arrio* ii 2, *Sism. Republ. Ital* c. xix., *Kingdon*, i 503, ii 67, 309-312). It is interesting to note that the Countess of *Par* ix 31 was his sister, and that she was beloved by the Sordello of *Purg* vi 74. (4) Obizzo II of Este, on the other hand, was a Guelph leader, Marquis of Ferrara and Ancona from 1264-93, and was therefore a contemporary of Dante's, and by his marriage in 1269 with the daughter of Alberto della Scala was brother in law to Dante's patron Can Grande. The dominant belief of the time was that his eldest son, alone or with his next brother, had assassinated him because he had left the lordship of Ferrara to his third and favourite son. This is the meaning of the "stepson" which is used to describe him (*Arrio* i 2, *Kingdon*, ii 310).

<sup>117</sup> The degrees of immersion in the blood-river correspond to the degrees of guilt.

A shade he showed us, on one side, alone,  
 And said, "In God's own lap he pierced the heart  
 Which, held in honour, on the Thames is known." 120  
 Then I saw those who all their upper part  
 Above the river held, both chest and head;  
 Of many, memories in my mind did start.  
 So step by step the depth diminished  
 Of that blood-stream, till but the feet were wet, 125  
 And there from out the fosse our passage led.  
 "As on this side the stream thine eye hath met  
 Still lessening in its depth of seething blood,"  
 The Centaur said, "but thou must not forget  
 That on the other deepens still its flood 130  
 Till its bed comes at last full round again,  
 Where in fit penance waits the tyrant brood.  
 There God's great justice smites with ceaseless pain  
 That Attila who was the earth's great scourge,  
 Pyrrhus and Sextus, and doth still constrain 135  
 The tears it draws forth with its seething surge  
 In Pazzo and Corneto, each Rimer,  
 Who on the roads war's havoc dread did urge"  
 Then turned he back and crossed the shallows near.

116 The passage is one of the few in the *Commedia* which brings us into contact with English history (comp. *Purg.* vii. 131). The murderer is Guido, or Guy, de Montfort, son of Simon de Montfort, Earl of Leicester. The date is 1272, six years after the defeat and death of the father at the battle of Evesham. The victim is Henry, son of Richard, Earl of Cornwall, the brother of Henry III., afterwards a candidate for the Empire. The scene is at Viterbo, where the cardinals were assembled for the election of a pope as successor to Clement IV. The prince was attending mass in the church of S. Silvestro, and as he was in the act of receiving the host, was stabbed by the assassin, and his body dragged by the hair into the open street. It was afterwards embalmed and deposited in the abbey of Hayles in Gloucestershire, but the heart, enclosed in a golden vase, was placed on the tomb of Edward the Confessor in Westminster Abbey, and thus was "held in honour on the Thames" (*Barlow*, p. 124). The passage takes its place, as I have shown elsewhere (*Contemp. Rev.* Dec. 1881), in the evidence which shows that Dante probably visited London and Oxford as well as Paris (*Par.* x. 136), Cologne (*C.* xxiii. 63), and Bruges (*Inf.* xv. 4). It is noticeable that the same fact is referred to in the *Dittamondo* of Fazio degli Uberti, ii. 29.

121 The mention of Attila, who is described by the name which he gave himself as being "the scourge of God," is probably connected with the tradition which Dante seems to have believed, that Florence had been laid waste by him (*C.* xiii. 149).

125 Doubts have been raised by commentators, but there can scarcely be any question that the Pyrrhus named here is the king of Epirus, and the Sextus the son of Pompeius. As regards the last, Dante may have had in his mind the line of Lucan (*vi.* 113):—

"*Polluit aquoreos Siculus furata triumphos*"

127 Again we have the Ghibelline poet condemning the sins of his own party. The Rimer of Corneto, in the Maremma, near Viterbo, seems to have been one of the old feudal lords who were the curse of Italy, issuing from their rock strongholds to plunder merchants, ravage villages, and checking the growing prosperity of towns. *Lubin* identifies him with the father of Dante's friend and protector, Ugucione della Fagguola, who was named Rimer, and had a castle at Corneto. Rimer Pazzo comes into closer contact with Dante's history

## CANTO XIII.

*The Forest of Suicides—The Harpies—Pier della Vigne—Lano of Siena—  
Jacopo da Sant' Andrea.*

Not yet had Nessus reached the farther shore,  
 When we within a wood an entrance found,  
 By not one single pathway traversed o'er,  
 Not green the leaves, but of a hue embrowned,  
 Nor smooth the boughs, but gnarled and intertwined, 5  
 No fruit, but thorns that poison as they wound.  
 Thickets so wild and dense they do not find,  
 Those beasts of prey which cultured regions hate,  
 Where Cecin's streams beyond Corneto wind.  
 There the foul Harpies made their nest and sate, 10  
 Who from the Strophades the Trojans drove  
 With warnings sad of coming evil fate,  
 Wide wings have they, a human face above,  
 Claws on their feet, their paunch all feathered o'er,  
 And their wild wailings fill the wondrous grove. 15  
 And my good Master. "Ere thou enter more,  
 Know thou art in the second circle's pale,"  
 So said he, "and shalt be till thou the shore  
 Shalt reach where horrid sand fills all the vale.  
 Therefore look well around, and thou shalt see 20  
 Things that might shake thy credence in my tale"  
 On all sides round deep groans of misery  
 I heard, yet saw no forms from which they came,  
 Wherefore I stopped in sore perplexity.

His castle was in the Val d' Arno, between Florence and Arezzo, and the former city passed laws to restrain his depredations. Both were said to have been employed by Frederick II (1228) to rob the Roman bishops, and the latter was excommunicated by Clement IV in 1269 (*Off*).

\* The description that follows, and the thought of the souls that form the trees in the dense forest, are manifestly reproduced from the story of Polydorus and the Harpies in *Æn* iii 19-68. The reference to the "*auri sacri fames*" of *Æn* iii 57 in *Purg* xxii 40 shows how much that part of Virgil's poem had impressed itself on Dante's mind. The mention of Corneto indicates a sequence of thought with the closing lines of the preceding canto. The Cecina is a river flowing into the sea a little south of I eghorn, and, with the Marta, on which Corneto stands, encloses the wild gloomy region of the Maremma, which, with its swamps, its miasma (*C* xxi 48), and its wild boars and serpents (*C*, xxv 19), seemed to Dante the type of an almost infernal desolation. The Harpies are taken by some interpreters as symbols of remorse, but qu.

17 The second circle is, as has been said in the note on *C*. xi. 40, that of the self-murderers.

21 A v. l. gives "things that would gain thy credence," but the text is preferable.

I think he thought that I thought of the same, 25  
 That from amid those trunks, from many a throat,  
 Came voice of those who hid themselves for shame.  
 Wherefore my Master said, "If thou take note  
 What comes, if thou one bough of these trees break,  
 Then will thy thoughts as baseless error float." 30  
 Then stretched I somewhat forth my hand to take,  
 And plucked a branch from off a tall thorn tree,  
 And the trunk cried, "Why this dire mangling make?"  
 And when with blood it was embrowned to see,  
 He cried again, "Why dost thou rend me so? 35  
 Doth nought of pity's spirit dwell in thee?  
 Men were we once, now here as trees we grow;  
 But were we souls sprung from the viper's brood,  
 Thy reckless hand might well more pity show."  
 As when one burns a brand of greenest wood 40  
 At one end, and the other spits and groans  
 And hisses, as the air and damp exude,  
 So from that broken stem came mingled tones  
 Of words and blood; and so I let the bough  
 Fall, and stood there, fear shaking all my bones. 45  
 "Had he been able to believe ere now,"  
 My Sage made answer, "O thou wounded soul,  
 What thus he sees, as my verse taught him how,  
 He had withheld his hand and left thee whole;  
 But the surpassing marvel made me lead 50  
 His mind to that which fills me now with dolor.  
 But tell him who thou wert, that he his deed  
 Atone for, by reviving there thy fame  
 Where he may soon with backward steps proceed."  
 "So charm thy sweet words," from the trunk there came 55  
 The cry, "I cannot hold my peace, and ye,  
 If I am somewhat prolix, spare your blame.

<sup>25</sup> The introspective thought-reading is eminently characteristic of the subtle play of the consciousness of a poet of the first order, just as the similitude of l. 40 is of the imagination which seeks for smiles, not as ornaments, but as the fittest illustrations of what the poet's inner eye had actually seen.

<sup>31</sup> The action and its sequel are identical with those of *ÆN.* III, 25.

<sup>37</sup> The story is one of the saddest in the whole poem. Dante's mind seems to have been haunted by it, as by all the other miseries and crimes which he associated with the reign of Frederick II., as that which had marred the ideal of a true empire and tainted the whole life of Italy. The speaker is Pier della Vigne, the chancellor of that emperor. The son of a

None other I than he who held each key  
 Of Frederick's heart, and turned them to and fro,  
 Locking, unlocking, with such subtlety, 60  
 That to none else his secrets would he show,  
 And my high task I wrought with zeal so true,  
 Pulse ceased to beat, nor did I slumber know  
 The harlot who her lewd eyes ne'er withdrew  
 From the high palace of the Cæsar's state 65  
 (The common bane and vice of courts she grew),  
 Inflamed all minds against me with fierce hate,  
 And they inflamed, Augustus so inflamed,  
 That joyous honour turned to sorrows great,  
 And my proud soul, that scorned to live so shamed, 70  
 Thinking by death to 'scape the pangs of scorn,  
 Made me blameworthy, 'gainst myself unblamed  
 By the root-fibres of this tree new-born,  
 I swear to you that faith I never brake  
 Towards my lord, whom all good did adorn 75  
 If one of you his upward journey take,  
 Let him redeem my memory, which lies  
 Sore smitten, nor from envy's blow can wake"  
 He paused, then "Seize the moment ere it flies,"  
 Tho Poet said, "since he is silent now ; 80  
 Speak and ask more as thoughts within thee rise"

vindictress of Capua, he had studied civil law at Bologna, and had risen to a high place in his master's favour as a counsellor during his long struggle with the Papacy, and was also a poet—an Italian poet—of no mean order. The jealousy of other courtiers prompted them to lying slanders, and it was whispered that he betrayed the Emperor's secrets to the Pope, and that he had conspired with his enemies to poison him. Frederick believed the charges, blinded him by compelling him to hold his face over red hot iron, and threw him into prison at Pisa, where, according to the register of the New Hospital in the archives of that city, he anticipated the death by stoning to which he had been destined, by dashing his head against the wall of his dungeon (*Scarl., Kington*, ii 478-503, *Sum H R I* iii 79). Dante, in this instance, while his stern theology makes him condemn the suicide, with no thought of a verdict of "temporary insanity," is stirred by his profound pity to vindicate the character of the man who had thus been done to death by slanderous tongues. The passage is memorable as having been reproduced by Chaucer (*Prologue to Legend of Good Women*)—

"Envy is lavender of the court alway,  
 For she ne parteth, neither night nor day,  
 Out of the house of Cæsar, thus saith Dante"

Chaucer's "lavender" = *lavandiere*, a euphemism for Dante's *meretrice*

75 The testimony to the noble qualities of Frederick, which might have made him the saviour of Italy, had they not been marred by his sensuality and unbelief, agrees with the *V. E.* i 12, where he speaks of the "nobility and righteousness" of him and of his son Manfred, and of both as "*humana secuti, brutalis indignantes*". Even in those in whom evil triumphed he recognised the vestiges of a better nature. In this instance the exiled poet spoke as a fellow-sufferer, whose character had been blackened by the "envy" of his political opponents.

And I to him replied, "Nay, question thou  
 Of what thou think'st my wish will satisfy;  
 Such pity moves me, that I know not how."  
 Then he began "So may the man comply 85  
 With liberal will in all thy words beseech,  
 Imprisoned soul, as thou wilt in reply  
 The manner of the soul's confinement teach  
 In these gnarled trunks, and tell us, if thou may,  
 If any from such limbs doth freedom reach" 90  
 Then sighed the sturdy trunk, and lo! straightway  
 That whistling wind was turned to voice of man.  
 "With briefest word I will mine answer say.  
 When the fierce spirit quitteth," he began,  
 "The body which in wrath it left behind, 95  
 Then Minos sends it to the seventh pit's span,  
 Into the wood it falls, no place assigned,  
 But there, where Fortune speeds its arrow's chance,  
 Like grain of spelt, it buds from out its rind,  
 And its young shoots to forest tree advance 100  
 The Harpies then its tender leaves devour,  
 Wound, and an outlet make for utterance  
 We, like the reet, shall come in judgment's hour,  
 To seek but not resume, our earthly dress,  
 O'er what he casts away man loses power. 105  
 These we shall drag, and through this wilderness  
 So drear each tree its several corpse shall bear,  
 Hung on the thorn of soul in sharp distress"  
 Still to that trunk we gave a listening ear,  
 Thinking that yet he fain would further speak, 110  
 When we a tumult new and strange did hear.  
 As one who stande where dogs the wild boar seek,  
 And hears them rushing wildly on their prey,  
 The crash of beasts and branches which they break,  
 Lo! through the space that on our left hand lay, 115  
 Two nude and wounded forms sped on so fast,  
 They broke the tangled boughs that etopped their way.

<sup>102</sup> The thought of the strange transformation, in which one traces the student of Ovid, as in the serpent metamorphoses of C. xxiiv, seems to be that the miseries of the lost soul, only found utterance when a branch was broken either by the Harpies or by the hands of others

<sup>118</sup> The history of the "two naked forms" may be briefly told (1) Lano (diminutive of



The foremost cried, "O hasten, Death, O haste!"  
 The other then, whose pace seemed somewhat slow,  
 Cried, "Lano, not so quick and nimble-paced 140  
 Thy legs, when thou to Toppo's jousts did'st go;"  
 And then, perchance because his breath did fail,  
 Himself one group made with the bush below.  
 Behind them dogs through all the woodland vale  
 Ranged far and wide, black, fierce, of swiftest tread, 125  
 As greyhounds from the leash their foe assail.  
 Him who there crouched they bit until he bled,  
 And limb by limb with fangs relentless tore,  
 And then bore off the fragments raw and red.  
 And then my Guide, my hand by his clasped o'er, 130  
 Led me to that same bush, whence vain sighs broke  
 From out its broken branches, bleeding sore.  
 "Jacopo of Sant' Andrea," so he spake,  
 "What helped it thee to make of me a screen?  
 What blame on me falls for thy foul life's sake?" 135  
 And when my Guide o'er him erect was seen,  
 He said, "Who wert thou, who from many a pore  
 Thy dolorous speech sigh'st out with blood between?"  
 And he to us "O souls, who to this shore  
 Have come to see the deed of foulest shame 140  
 Which from my trunk my leaves and branches tore,  
 At foot of this sad bush collect the same  
 I of that city was that chose as lord  
 The Baptist, whence her lord of earlier fame

Ercolano) was of Siena, the companion of the rich voluptuaries of C. xxix 110-138, and with them wasted his substance in riotous living. When the Siennese were defeated by the Aretines in a skirmish at Pieve del Toppo, near Arezzo, he threw himself into the ranks of the enemy, seeking death rather than endure the poverty which awaited him at home (*Bocc. Cent.*) (2) Jacopo of S. Andrea was in like evil repute at Padua, and strange stories were told of his wanton prodigality, flinging gold coins into the sea at Venice, burning one of his own villas that he might see a fire, or a peasant's cottage that he might warm himself on his return from hunting. Both the sinners belong, of course, to another class than the self-murderers, and are among those who, as in C. xi 41, have destroyed not their life, but their means of living. The sneer in l. 131 may perhaps imply that, after all, he was somewhat slow in his movement, whether of attack or flight. It has been suggested that the black dogs are probably symbols of the creditors of the two prodigals.

140 The unnamed suicide has been conjecturally identified (1) with a judge of the Agli family, who having been condemned for a corrupt judgment hung himself, as in l. 131, in his own house, (2) with a Rocco de Mozzi, a rich man whose excesses brought him to poverty and drove him to suicide. The passage depends for its significance on a knowledge of the early history of Florence. Mars, it was said, had been of old its tutelary god, and his temple forms the substructure of the present Baptistery. When the Empire became Christian, Florence took St. John the Baptist as its patron saint, and the image of Mars was placed as a kind of historical palladium in a tower near the Arno. When the city was laid

Still mars her peace with all his art abhorred ; 145  
 And were there not, where men the Arno pass,  
 Some image of him still all duly stored,  
 Those citizens who raised it from the mass  
 Of ashes left by Attila the dread,  
 In vain had spent their time and toil. Alas ! 150  
 I of my house myself my gallows made."

## CANTO XIV.

*The Desert of Fiery Sand—The Violent against God—The Grand Old Form  
 in Crete*

I, FORASMUCH as love for my dear land  
 Constrained me, gathered up the scattered leaves,  
 And gave them back to him, who hoarse did stand.  
 Then came we where the circle third receives  
 Division from the second, there we saw 5  
 The dread devices righteous Wrath conceives.  
 To make full clear those matters of new awe,  
 I say that we had reached a wide waste plain,  
 Where from its bed no plants their nurture draw ;  
 The dolorous wood engarlands that champaign, 10  
 E'en as that wood the drear fosse hemmeth in,  
 There stayed we on the borders of the twain,  
 All sand, deep, dry, and fine the soil within,  
 No other in its kind than that of old  
 Where Cato's footsteps did an entrance win. 15

waste by Totila (whom Dante confuses with Attila) in 450, it was thrown into the Arno, recovered when Charlemagne rebuilt the city, and placed on the Ponte Vecchio. In 1078 the bridge was carried away by a flood, and the statue fell into the river, was recovered and replaced in 1218, and finally disappeared in another flood in 1333. As long as it remained there was an annual festival in its honour (*Gon. Pis.*), and it was decked with wreaths of flowers. The whole passage is full of a concentrated sarcasm. What is really meant is that the Florentines worshipped not the Baptist, but his image on their coins: that they were continually engaged in wars, foreign and civil, and that happily there was yet a remnant of the Mars spirit among them to counteract their Mammon-worship, without that, with all its evils, their city would have perished utterly. Comp. *Latini, Ists in Ort* p. 30.

<sup>1</sup> Comp. C. xiii. 143. The unnamed soul had the claims of a fellow-citizen.

<sup>2</sup> The sun now in view is that of the violent against God, the sun of open blasphemy and defiance, of whom Capaneus is the only representative instance.

<sup>3</sup> Dante refers to the history of Cato's march through the Libyan desert, as given in his favourite Lucan (*Phars.* ix. 379-497).

Vengeance of God ! what fear of thee should hold  
 The soul of every man who readeth here  
 That which these eyes of mine did then behold !  
 Large herds of naked spirits saw I there,  
 Who wailed their evil fate full piteously, 20  
 And each a different sentence seemed to bear  
 Supine upon the ground one group did lie,  
 Another sat all gathered up and squat,  
 A third unceasing to and fro did ply,  
 The greater part thus moving had their lot, 25  
 The fewest those who in their torments lay,  
 But for their grief a looser tongue had got  
 And over all the sand a falling spray  
 Showered rain of flakes of over-spreading flame,  
 Like snow upon the Alps on windless day. 30  
 E'en so when Alexander's armies came  
 To India's torrid climes, upon his host  
 The fire showers fell, and earth received the same,  
 And so his troops he sent o'er all the coast  
 To plough it up, because the fiery rain 35  
 Left to itself was better quenched and lost.  
 So fell the eternal burning on the plain,  
 And so the sand was set on fire, and glowed,  
 Like tinder 'neath the steel, so doubling pain.  
 Unceasing still their restless gestures showed, 40  
 Of wretched hands, on left side and on right,  
 Still flinging off the ever-burning load

<sup>19</sup> This is the first mention, since C. i. 100, of the nakedness of the lost souls, but the fact must be assumed throughout.

<sup>22-24</sup> The three lines indicate the three grades of evil, each with its own appropriate penalty. Those who had defied Heaven lie prostrate on the earth with upturned faces, the sinners sit as they used to sit of old, crouching over their money counters, the sinners against nature are tormented by the same restless impulses as those whom he had seen, as in C. v. 31, suffering the doom of a less hateful form of sensual evil, but under far more terrible conditions. They had "burnt" in their lusts before, now they are punished by the fiery rain. Comp. *Gen.* xix. 24.

<sup>30</sup> Another trace of distant wanderings, probably on the journey to Arles, implied in C. i. 122, or to Paris (*Par.* x. 136). The word "Alp" is probably to be taken in its widest sense, of any lofty mountain.

<sup>31</sup> The tradition is found in a letter purporting to be written by Alexander to Aristotle, given by Albertus Magnus and Benvenuto Imola. The letter narrates two perils, one from a tremendous snowstorm which threatened to cover the whole camp, so that Alexander gave orders to his troops to tread it down by constant marching, the other from falling flames of fire, against which they protected themselves with their clothes. Dante apparently mixes up the two facts in his memory (*scart.*).

<sup>40</sup> The word used for "game" (*tesca*) seems to have been specially used of a Neapolitan pantomimic dance, in which hands and feet were in perpetual movement. A complete verb is found in *Purg.* x. 63.

I then began : " O Master, thou whose might  
     Prevails o'er all except those demons stern,  
     Who at the gateway's entrance met our sight, 45  
 Who is that great one who scarce cares to turn  
     Back from the fire, and lies in scornful pride,  
     So that the rain scarce seems his flesh to burn ?"  
 And then that same one, who had quick descried  
     That I had asked my Guide about his name, 50  
     " What I was living, dead now am I," cried.  
 ' Though Jove should weary out his craftsman lame,  
     From whom in wrath his thunder-bolt he bare,  
     Smitten by which, to my last day I came,  
 And weary out, in turn, the others there, 55  
     At Mongibello in their smithy's gloom,  
     Crying, ' Good Vulcan, help, O help us, hear !'—  
 E'en as he did at Phlegra's field of doom,—  
     And hurled his darts at me with all his might,  
     No joy of vengeance should his soul illumine " 60  
 Then spake my Guide, voice raised to such a height,  
     That never so till then I heard him speak,  
     " O Capaneus, because thy pride and spite  
 Are still unquenched, more torments on thee break ;  
     All anguish, but thine own exceeding rage, 65  
     Would for thy wrath be penalty too weak.'  
 Then with a voice whose tones he did assuage,  
     He turned and said, " This man was of the Seven  
     Who Thebes besieged, and waged, and yet doth wage,  
 Fierce war 'gainst God, and little cares for Heaven, 70  
     But, as I said to him, his passion's heat  
     To him fit badge for such a heart is given.

<sup>45</sup> Vulcan, who was cast into Hell by Jupiter for having forged his thunderbolts for his enemies, and who gave his name to the Volcano of Ætna, where he and his workmen, the Cyclops, were said to be imprisoned—

" *Vulcani domus et Vulcania nomine tellus* "—ÆN. vii. 416.

Mongibello, a Sicilian name for Ætna, was probably a corruption of the Italian *Monte* and the Arabic *Djebel* (= mountain)

<sup>56</sup> Phlegra, in Thessaly, the scene of the war of the Titans, who fought against Jupiter and were smitten by him

<sup>65</sup> Capaneus, one of the "Seven against Thebes" of Æschylus (*S. c. Th.* 420) and Euripides (*Phœn.* 1179). Dante probably drew his knowledge from Statius (*J. Arb.* x. 821). The thought expressed in l. 65 implies the profound truth that sin is its own worst punishment.

Now follow me, and set not thou thy feet  
 Where the sand burneth hot, thy way to wend,  
 But ever near the woodland seek retreat." 75  
 Silent we passed to where the waters send  
 Forth from the wood a tiny rivulet,  
 Whose crimson hue still sets my hair on end  
 As flowe the stream at Bulicame met,  
 Which sinful women then at will divide, 80  
 Down through the sand that river's course was set,  
 Its bottom and steep banke on either side  
 And margine broad were made throughout of stone,  
 Whence I decerned the pæc muet there be tried.  
 "Of all the rest that I to thee have ehowen 85  
 Since we our entrance found within the gate  
 Whose open threshold is denied to none,  
 Ne'er by thine eyes was een a wonder great  
 And notable as is this river here,  
 Which all the flamelets doth annihilate" 90  
 These words my Master whispered in mine ear,  
 Therefore I prayed that he would grant the food  
 For which he granted appetite to hear  
 "In the mid-sea there lies in solitude,"  
 He spake, "an ieland waste men know as Ciete, 95  
 Under whose king the world in pureness etood.  
 A mountain rises, once the pleasant seat  
 Of streams and bowers, by Ida's name it goes,  
 A desert now, as something obsolete.

<sup>80</sup> Bulicame, a mineral spring near Viterbo (Gregory IX. had gone there as a patient just before his death in 1241 *Kingdon*, ii 354), the baths of which were frequented, as such places commonly were (hence the secondary meaning of *bagnio*), by women of all fame Ciampi (*Munic Ital* Rome, 1865) quotes a curious edict of the commune of Viterbo in 1464, ordering these women to keep to Bulicame, and not to come into the town (*Scart*). The ruins of the bath of Ser Paolo Benigno still stand between Bulicame and the town (*Barlow*, p. 190). The description implies that the stream flowed through an artificial channel into the establishment, and was thence distributed in the baths. The rivulet which is compared to Bulicame is Phlegethon, the fiery river of *Æn* vi 551.

<sup>94-100</sup> The episode is the first instance in the *Comyn* of a distinctly historical symbolism, after the manner of the vision of Daniel (ii-iv) and St. John, and embodies the poet's thoughts of a philosophy of history. Crete is named as the cradle of the Trojan (*Æn* iii 105), and therefore of the Roman people (*Æn* iii 104), and was occupied in Dante's time by the Venetians. The king is the Saturn of the Golden Age (*Æn* viii 319). Saturn (symbol perhaps of time) devours his children, and Rhea (= Cybele = the Earth-Goddess) sends her new-born son (Jupiter) to a cavern of Mount Ida, where her priest, the Curetes, drown the child's cries with their shouts and cymbals. The "grand old form" is the symbol of the ideal of universal history as seen in the Roman Empire. He looks away from Damietta on the eastern border of Egypt, *s.e.*, westward, for that, from the poet's standpoint, is the direction of human progress. Possibly there is a side glance at the fact that the time of

That mount, as cradle safe, once Rhea chose 100  
 For her young child, and, better to conceal,  
 Whene'er he cried, great shoutings round him rose  
 The mountain depths an old man's form reveal,  
 Which turns its back on Damietta old  
 And still to Rome, as mirror, makes appeal 105  
 Its head is fashioned all of purest gold,  
 Of silver pure its arms are, and its breast;  
 Then to the loins brass doth its form enfold,  
 Then downward choicest iron is all the rest,  
 Save that the right foot is of kiln-baked clay, 110  
 And his chief weight upon that foot is pressed  
 Each part, the gold excepted, doth display  
 A fissure, whence flow ever dripping tears,  
 Which, gathering, through that cavern pierce their way  
 From rock to rock the stream this valley nears, 115  
 And Acheron forms, and Styx, and Phlegethon,  
 And hence down through this narrow sluice careers,  
 Till it arrives where more descent is none,  
 And forms Cocytus What that pool may be  
 Thyself shalt see—more needs not now be shown " 120  
 And I to him "This streamlet that we see,  
 Why, if it floweth from our world above,  
 On this bank only shows it visibly?"

the Crusades, in which Damietta had played so prominent a part is now over and that the work of the Empire now lay in the West rather than the East (*Quon* 108). He looks towards Rome as a mirror for it is there only as Dante thought, as the seat of a true Empire and a true Church that his ideal of monarchy could be realised (*Mon* ii *Conv* iv 5). For another apocalyptic vision of the same type, comp *Purg* xxxii. There was another Damietta in Syria near Acre which was destroyed by the Egyptians in the age of the Crusades but the question which of the two Dante meant does not affect the symbolism.

100 The form of the symbolism comes from *Dan* ii 31-33 but the interpretation is different. Here we have not the succession of monarchies but the classical *mythos* of the four ages of gold and silver and bronze and iron as Dante found them, e.g. in Ovid (*Metam* i 89-150). But again he has his interpretation of his own. As interpreted by *Conv* iv 5 *Mon* i 16 his golden age was that of Augustus, the silver that of the beginning of the decline and fall the third that of the more complete decadence which ended in the division of the Eastern and Western empires. The legs of iron point to the endless wars of the two empires. The right foot of clay is the Western empire which no longer rests on a firm foundation the last hope of a strong empire having perished with the Hohenstaufen dynasty but on the crumbling support of a purely selfish policy leading as it did, to corruption in both Church and Empire and to internal dissensions in every city in Italy. That seems to Dante to indicate the coming crash perhaps the end of the world which would make an earthly realization of his ideal impossible. How passionately he clings to that ideal we may see by his words and acts when the arrival of Henry VII. seemed for a short time to bring it within a measurable distance (*Purg* xxxii 42, *Par* xvii 82, xxvii 63 xxx 137, and the Epistles in *Prat* O M ii 440-475).

115 One notes the terrible grandeur of the symbol. The sorrows and the tears of men consequent on the gradual deterioration of the Empire are the source from which flow, one out of the other, the rivers of Hell, the woes of the condemned Cocytus, as the river of wailing receives them all.

And he to me : " Thou know'st that thou dost move  
 As circling round, and, far though thou hast sped, 125  
 Stall to the left down-sloping, as we rove,  
 Not yet hast thou the whole encompassed,  
 Wherefore, if thou see'st things all strange and new,  
 No wonder need upon thy face be read."  
 And I again : " Where, Master, shall I view 130  
 Or Phlegethon or Lethe? for of this  
 Thou speakest not, and say'st the other drew  
 Its water from this shower " " Each question is  
 Pleasing to me, but of that crimson tide,"  
 He said, " thou canst not well the meaning miss 135  
 Lethe shall meet thine eyes, but far outside  
 This pit, e'en there where spirits make them pure  
 When sins repented of no more abide "  
 Then said he, " Now 'tis time we should secure  
 Our exit from the wood, behind me tread, 140  
 The banks which are not burnt give footing sure,  
 And here above them every flame falls dead."

## CANTO XV

*The Sin against Nature—Brunetto Latini.*

Now on a margin firm we travel o'er,  
 And the stream's vapour so the heat doth slake,  
 It saves from fire the water and the shore.  
 E'en as 'twixt Bruges and Guzzant' Flemings make,  
 Fearing the flood that on their sea-beach rose, 6  
 A bank whereon the ocean's strength may break ;

130-136 The question implies that the pilgrim did not know that he was even now actually on the banks of Phlegethon (*Æn* vi 550), and as he had heard of Lethe, he sought to know where that was. Underlying the question there are, if I mistake not, the thoughts that such sin as that with which he was now in contact is set on fire of Hell, that there is no oblivion in the lost. The Lethe of forgetfulness of past evil comes only as the close of repentance and purification. Lethe is the last stage of the poet's purification (*Purg* xxxi 101). For Acheron, the river of woes, see C. iii 78.

6 Two more notes of the extent and direction of Dante's travels. (1) Guzzante has been identified (a) with Ghent, (b) with Cadsand, about 22 kilometres of Bruges (*Phil*), or (c) with Wissant, 15 kilometres S.W. of Calais (*Scarf*), b-tween Capes Grisuez and Blancnez.

Such as the Paduans, where the Brenta flows,  
 Construct, their towns and castles to protect,  
 Ere Chiarentana with the warm spring glows,  
 E'en such in form did he this bank erect, 10  
 Though not like these in width, nor yet in height,  
 Whate'er it be, the Master-Architect.  
 Already was the forest out of sight,  
 So far from it our footsteps now were set,  
 That even had I turned, 'twere vanished quite, 15  
 When soon a troop of wandering souls we met,  
 Who by the bank's side moved, and every one  
 Looked at us as men look at eve when yet  
 The young moon's crescent in the heaven is shown,  
 And so upon us they their eyebrows bent 20  
 As tailor old at needle's eye doth frown.  
 By such a tribe espied, with glance intent  
 I was by one identified, who took  
 My mantle's hem and cried, "What wonderment!"  
 And I, when he his arm towards me shook, 25  
 From binging him to recognition clear,  
 I was not hindered by his scorched look,  
 But thought my mind a knowledge gained full clear,  
 And bending down my hand toward his face,  
 I asked, "What, Ser Brunetto, art thou here?" 30

Villani (xii 68) describes a Guizzante in terms which identify it with the latter. In Dante's time Calais and Wissant were reckoned as belonging to Flanders (Spruner *Atlas*). The description apparently selects the two termini of the embankment. In connection with Dante's travel the passage indicates a route taken from Cologne (C. xxi 62) to Bruges and Wissant, and thence by Dover to London and Oxford (see note on C. xii 120). Wissant, the harbour of which is now choked up and disused, was in the 12th and 13th centuries the usual port of embarkation for England (Kille, *Life of Anselm*, i 227 ii 166, 232, 303). Its neighbourhood abounds in remains of fortifications and embankments raised on natural dunes. It has been identified with the *Portus Itius* of Caesar (Joanne *Art. Wissant*), Guiz *Pis in loco*. (2) The second illustration is taken from the more familiar scene of Padua, and the Brenta which flows through it. That river, liable to inundation from the melting snows of Chiarentana (now known as Carezana), a mountain ridge in the Trentino between Valvignota and Valfrunte, on its left bank had been carefully embanked by the Paduans to protect their fields (*Scart*). By others, with less probability, Chiarentana has been identified with Carinthia.

1- The meaning often given to the words "whoe'er he be" is inconsistent with C. iii 5. There was no doubt in Dante's mind as to who had made Hell. What he leaves in doubt is the precise degree of likeness to the embankments near Bruges and Padua.

10 The wandering souls are those who have sinned against nature in the sin of the Cities of the Plain.

18 The two similitudes are characteristically out of the range of poetical elegance. What was wanted was the picture of the "screwed up" look of intense curiosity and this they gave as nothing else could do.

30 Of all the names with which we meet in Dante's Hell this is probably that which we are most pained to find there. Brunetto Latini had been the poet's teacher, had led him step by step out of the routine of education to a higher wisdom, had taught him how man becomes



And he: "My son, Ah, think it no disgrace,  
 If I, Brunetto, with thee backward stray,  
 And, for a moment, quit the rabble base."  
 I answered, "This with all my power I pray,  
 And if thou wilt that I should sit with thee, 35  
 I will, if he please, for I go his way."  
 "My son," he said, "who in this company  
 A moment stops, lies there a hundred year,  
 No screen against the smiting fire has he,  
 Wherefore go on; thy skirts I'll follow near, 40  
 And then will I rejoin my comrades' host,  
 Who wail their endless doom with ceaseless tear"  
 I dared not leave the pathway of that coast  
 To be beside him, but I bowed my head,  
 As one whose mind in reverent thought is lost, 45  
 And he began, "What fate or fortune dread  
 Before the last day brings thee here below?  
 And who is this by whom thy steps are led?"  
 "Up there above, where life serene we know,"  
 I said, "I in a valley lost did stray, 50  
 Ere that my age its fulness ripe did show.

eternal in the knowledge of God or the eternity of fame, had been kind, benignant, fatherly in look and tone, and yet here he stands for ever branded with the mark of infamy. Could not the poet, we are tempted to ask, have spared us this? What impelled him to so fierce a condemnation, for which no writer, save Dante himself, gives any warrant? To answer that question we must go back in thought to the moment when Dante discovered his master's guilt, when, through common fame or direct knowledge, he first learnt to see that he was as a "whited sepulchre" full of all uncleanness. Looking back to the fiery indignation, the burning shame of that moment, looking to the prevalence of like vices in the class to which his master had belonged, he could not glow over his guilt or bury it in silence. His name, and some other, was to teach that one but the pure in heart shall see God, and that no gifts of genius, no kindness of nature, will avail to save the impure, who have died impenitent, from condemnation.

The story of Brunetto Latini may be briefly told. Born circ. 1220, he soon took his place among the scholars of the earlier Renaissance, translated from Cicero and Sallust, became a leading person among the Florentine Guelphs, and was made notary, or secretary, of the commune. After the battle of Montaperti he was banished with the other Guelphs (C. x. 48), and retired to Paris. Probably during his stay there he wrote his *Trésor*, a kind of encyclopædia of mediæval knowledge, in French. He returned to Florence circ. 1260, and died in 1294, having had both Dante and Guido Cavalcanti (Verini, *De Vir Illust.* 11) as his pupils. During this period he probably wrote his *Tesoretto*, a didactic poem in Italian, noticeable as containing (1) the confession that he and those like him might be described as "*un poco mondane*" (Villani (viii. 10) describes him as "*uomo mondano*"), and the use of the feminine "*mondana*" as *more* *fice*, shows the connotation of the adjective), (2) a strong denunciation of the sin for which he is here punished. A work of a singularly foul character, *Il Pataffio*, has been ascribed to him, but critics seem agreed that this is of later date. It may be noted further, (1) that Brunetto had translated some of the ethical and physical treatises of Aristotle, (2) that he was sent on an embassy to Alphonso of Castile in 1260. Translations of Ovid and Boethius into Italian are also ascribed to him (*Wag.* 51, 65, *Osann* 54). *Comp. Ort.* pp. 125-170.

<sup>30</sup> The penalty of C. xiv. 40 did not exclude this partial defence.

<sup>41</sup> The implied thought is that the sinners were divided into special companies, either according to their nationality or their callings.

<sup>50</sup> The phrase refers to C. i. 25, and has besides the interest of reproducing one of Brun-

But yesternorn I bent my steps away,  
 And, as I turned me, he appeared to me,  
 And leads me homeward by this weary way "  
 And he to me : " If thy star guideth thee, 55  
 Thou canst not fail a glorious port to gain,  
 If in yon fairer life I truth did see ;  
 And but that I by death too soon was ta'en,  
 Beholding Heaven towards thee so benign,  
 I for thy work had strengthened thee again : 60  
 But that ungrateful people and malign,  
 Which came in ancient days from Fiesolè,  
 And of its rock and millstone still shows sign,  
 Will for thy good deeds be thine enemy ;  
 And reason good ; for 'mid the sour crab's kind 65  
 It is not meet the sweet fig's fruit to see.  
 On earth an ancient saying calls them blind,  
 A people envious, avaricious, proud ;  
 Take heed that of their ways thou cleanse thy mind  
 Thy fortune hath on thee this boon bestowed, 70  
 That either faction shall thy help desire,  
 But 'twixt the goat and grass shall be long road

netto's own similitudes in the opening of the *Tesoretto*. The scholar, as of old, reports to the master the perplexities in which, in spite of, or because of, his teaching, he had found himself involved. Comp *Purg* xxxi 34

<sup>55</sup> Once only (C i 79) is Virgil named in the *Inferno*. Dante avoids the mention of his name in Hell, just as he avoids that of God, of Christ, of the Virgin Mary.

<sup>56</sup> Brunetto, like other astronomers of his time, believed in stellar influences, and may have cast Dante's horoscope. The poet was born under Gemini and this implied the gifts of genius and wisdom (C xavi 23. *Par* xai 110). The words seem to have been written under the influence of a hope which remained unfulfilled, unless, indeed, the glorious port was either a deathless fame, or a yet more deathless life.

<sup>61</sup> Fiesole, in Florentine tradition, was the oldest city in the world, and had been destroyed by Julius Cæsar and by Totila, each time rising from its ruins. On the rebuilding of Florence by Charlemagne, many of the Fiesolans came within the walls of the city and mingled with the older inhabitants who claimed descent from Rome (*Vieppo*, i c 1, 2, based on *Vill* i-iv, *Malisp* c 42-50). In this intermixture Dante, who prided himself on his nobler Roman blood (*Conv* iv 5), saw the cause of all the evils which had brought misery on his city and himself.

<sup>67</sup> The proverb of the "blind Florentines," still extant (*Scart*), has been referred either to their trusting the promises of Iolita (*Vill* ii 1) or their having been cheated by the Pisans, who covered with crimson cloth two columns of porphyry that had been injured by fire and palmed them off as new (*Bocc*).

<sup>71</sup> The prophecies of the *Commedia* reflect, of course, the poet's view of the events that were passing at the time when he wrote them. Here we already note traces of the policy of isolation, the *partie per se stesso* of *Par* xvii 69, mingled with the thought, which, like the hope of C 56, was never more than a thought, that sooner or later either party would be glad to have his support on his own terms. The proverb of l 72 is like that of "the cup and the lip." The parties of Florence will have to wait some time before they gain their ends. The "beasts of Fiesole" are Dante's special enemies, probably therefore the Neri, and chief among them the house of the Donati.

There let the beasts of Fiesole their byre  
     Make for themselves, nor touch the nobler grain,  
     If any grow upon their dunghill's mire, 75  
 In which the holy seed revives again  
     Of those old Rōmans, who, when it was made  
     The nest of evil, still did there remain."  
 "Had that been fully given me which I prayed,"  
     I answered him, "thou had'st not here as yet 80  
     An outlaw from our nature's lot been laid,  
 For in my mind and heart there still is set  
     That face of thine, kind, tender, fatherly,  
     When thou didst hourly teach me as we met  
 How man attaineth to eternity, 85  
     And how for that I thank thee, it is right,  
     While yet I live, my speech should witness be  
 What of my course thou tellest me I write,  
     And keep it, with another text to spell,  
     For Her, who'll, if I reach her, read aright. 90  
 This only would I thee full clearly tell,  
     So long as conscience makes me not afraid,  
     I wait my fortune, work it ill or well  
 Not strange unto mine ears such pledge is made,  
     Therefore let Fortune turn her wheel at will, 95  
     And as he wills, the peasant churl his spade "  
 My Master thereupon turned round until  
     O'er his right cheek he glanced, and looked at me,  
     And said, "He listeneth well who noteth still "

81-87 As with *Farinata*, Dante recognises in Brunetto whatever there had been of good. He would have prayed for longer life for him, and therefore for repentance would fain have met his master, who "had died and made no sign," in Purgatory, and not in Hell. He could never forget the presence he had once loved, the hours in which he had felt his heart burn within him in longing for an immortality of fame, if not also (for the words are open to either meaning) for the higher eternal life. There may be a special reference to a striking passage in the *Treiser*, vi 55, in which Brunetto speaks of the man who is "made like to God and to His angels" as leading the "noblest life" and enjoying the only true blessedness.

89 The "other text" is found in the predictions of Ciacco (*C* vi 65-73) and *Farinata* (*C* x 79-81). All these partial forecasts the pilgrim has learnt to refer to the fuller insight of Beatrice.

92-96 The *mens conscia recti* which Dante feels that he can claim finds its parallel in *Par* xvii 24. There he stands "four-square" to the blows of fate here, with the parable of *C* vii 96 in his thoughts, he bids Fortune turn her wheel. Comp. *Æn* v 710. The second clause of l 96 = "let men do what they will," but the "peasant churl" is probably a thrust at one of the "beasts of Fiesole." Comp. l 72.

Not therefore speaking less, in company 100  
 I go with Ser Brunetto, and ask who they  
 His comrades were, best known, of chief degree  
 And he: "Of some 'tis good to know; well may  
 On other names a prudent silence fall.  
 For the full tale would take a longer day. 105  
 Know then, in brief, that these were great clerks all,  
 Great men of letters they and of great fame,  
 Sunk, while on earth, in that sin's shameful thrall  
 Priscian goes there with all his troop of shame,  
 Francesco of Accorso too, and there, 110  
 If thou art fain such scurf to know and name,  
 Thou see'st him whom the Servants' Servant's care  
 From Arno to Bacchiglione moved,  
 Where he has left the members sin did wear  
 More would I tell, but longer unproved 115  
 Nor speech nor walk may be, for now I see  
 New smoke from out the sand rise, upward moved,  
 A crowd comes on with whom I must not be,  
 Only to thee my 'Treasure' I commend,  
 There I still live, no more I ask of thee." 120

<sup>100</sup> Holding, as we have seen, was forbiddeo (l. 38) under heaviest penalties, which Dante would not knowingly bring on his old master

<sup>102</sup> Good to know as a warning to those who were yielding to like vices Four only are named here three more in C. xvi

<sup>106</sup> The evil which had passed from the Cities of the Plain to the Phœnician Canaanites, and thence to the Greeks, and so on to the Romans, seems never to have been eradicated from the life of Italy Frederick II's court at Palermo was said to have been tainted with it It was fostered, of course by the compulsory celibacy of the clergy, and by the undisciplined and over crowded life of the teachers and scholars at all European universities Roger Bacon (*Comp. Stud.* c. 2) speaks of its prevalence in Paris, noting by the way that Louis IX. had banished many foreign teachers as guilty of it It was the prominent charge brought against the Templars by Philip le Bel Purvey, in the preface to what is known as *Wyke's Bible* (ed. Forshall and Maddeu), mourns over its prevalence at Oxford It is necessary to state these facts in order to explain the emphasis of Dante's warning note

<sup>109</sup> No mention of this fact in the life of the great grammarian (*A. circ.* 525) has been traced by commentators Possibly Dante may have followed some tradition now lost, or taken him as the representative of a class So Pietro Dante *in loc.*

<sup>110</sup> Francesco d'Accorso of Florence, the son of one of the great exponents of the Roman law at Bologna (*d.* 1229), was himself a professor in that city, and wrote a commentary on the Code of Justinian In 1273 he followed Edward I., who passed through Bologna on his return from Palestine, to England, and for six years taught civil law at Oxford In 1280 he returned to Bologna, and *d.* 1294 Dante may therefore have known him personally Father and son rest in a sepulchre still extant in Bologna (*Scart.*, *Kington*, II. 319) He was noted also for his usury (*Ort.* p. 80)

<sup>112</sup> Here we have a glimpse at still more recent history The *servus servorum* is Boniface VIII., whom Dante is never weary of branding with the note of infamy (C. xix. 53, xxvii. 70) The criminal Andrea de' Mozzi, Bishop of Florence in 1287, was translated to Vicenza, or the Bacchiglione, in 1295, died in 1296, and was buried at Florence in the Church of S. Gregory Dante apparently knew the seamy side of his life

<sup>119</sup> The vanity of authorship is not extinct even in Hell Brunetto finds comfort in the

Then turned he, and like those his way did wend  
 Who at Verona for the mantle green  
 Scour through the plain,—like him who at the end  
 As winner, not as loser, there is seen.

## CANTO XVI.

*Guido Guerra—Tegghiaio—Rusticucci—The Waterfall of the Dark River—  
 The Cord thrown away*

ALREADY was I where was heard the din  
 Of water falling to the circle near,  
 Like hum of bees the busy hive within,  
 When shadows three forth starting did appear,  
 With haste advancing from a crowd which passed 5  
 Beneath the rain of torture sharp and drear  
 And each one cried, as they drew near us fast,  
 "Halt, thou who seem'st in fashion of thy dress  
 To have thy lot in our corrupt land cast."  
 Ah me! what scars, old, new, and numberless, 10  
 The burning flames on all their limbs had made!  
 E'en to remember still works sore distress.

thought that in Dante's visit there is an opening for an advertisement. The poet obviously remembered many instances of a like weakness, the love of man's praise taking the place of that of the praise of God. For the *Treiso* see note on l. 32.

<sup>123</sup> Internal evidence that the canto was written during, or after, one of the poet's visits at Verona. The games were instituted in memory of the victory gained by Azzo d'Este, Podesta of Verona, over the Counts of St Bonifazio and Montecchi in 1207. They were held on the first Sunday in Lent, and green mantles were given as prizes for races in which men ran naked. The comparison over and above its vividness (the souls in Dante's Hell wear no garments) may convey the poet's feeling that such an exhibition was fitter for the sinners whom Dante had described (comp. C. xvi. 21) than for living Christian men. The whole Canto is, it must be owned, terribly Juvenalian in its subject matter, but Dante might have asked with Juvenal whether there was not a cause for the "*sæva indignatio*" which he utters in it.

<sup>1</sup> The sound of water is that of the stream that falls from the seventh circle to the eighth, as in l. 92-102.

<sup>4</sup> The three shadows are those of Guido Guerra (l. 37), Tegghiaio (l. 41), and Rusticucci (l. 44).

<sup>5</sup> The special distinctive parts of the Florentine dress were the mantle, the hood, and the huretta (as seen in Giotto's portrait of Dante in the Bargello), to which men saw the survival of an older costume. They, the descendants of the Romans, were still the *gens togata* of Italy (*Vill* xii. 4).

<sup>12</sup> We note, as in C. v. 139, the poet's compassion for the sinners while he loathes the sin. That men who might have risen so high, should, through that one fault, have sunk so low, there was "the pity of it."

Unto their cries good heed my Master paid,  
 And turned his face to me and spake: "Now hold!  
 'Tis meet we courteous be to these," he said, 15  
 "And if it were not for the flames that fold  
 The region all around us, I would say  
 Thy steps, not theirs, should be at full speed told."  
 Thus, as we halted, their old wailing they  
 Began again, and when they near us drew, 20  
 All three of them went whirling on their way,  
 As wrestlers stripped and oiled are wont to do,  
 Watching for vantage where they best may seize,  
 Ere they with blows and thrusts the fight pursue.  
 Then wheeling round, his visage each of these 25  
 So turned toward me, that his neck did take  
 Another course than that his feet did please  
 "O if the torture of this deep pit wake  
 Scorn in thy soul of us and of our prayer,"  
 Then one began, "and dark, scorched features make 30  
 These shrink, our fame may yet prevail to share  
 The knowledge who thou art whose living feet  
 Through paths of Hell so safely seem to fare  
 He in whose footprints now I follow fleet,  
 Though naked now he go and scorched all bare, 35  
 Had higher birth than would thy credence meet  
 Grandson he was to good Gualdrada fair;  
 His name was Guido Guerra, and from birth  
 With mind and sword he wrought his own full share.

<sup>15</sup> Courtesy, due to the three as having been, apart from the sin which placed them where they were, men worthy of honour and of high repute Comp C 59, and C vi 79-81

<sup>21</sup> The simile probably connects itself with the games at Verona that had furnished the comparison of C xv 122

<sup>27</sup> Gualdrada, daughter of Bellincione Berti (comp *Par* xv 112, xvi 99), was one of the heroines of Florentine tradition. When the Emperor Otto IV (1209-15) came to Florence, admired her beauty, and wished to kiss her, she answered that she would grant that privilege to none but her husband. Otto honoured her for her boldness, and gave her in marriage to Count Guido Guerra (*Vill* v 37). Her grandson, the Guido Guerra whom Dante sees, had been captain of the Guelph army of Florence in 1255, and tried to dissuade the Florentines from the expedition against Arezzo which ended in the disaster of Montaperti, after which he was banished with Dante's father and the other Guelphs, returning with them after the victory of Charles of Anjou over Manfred (1267). The Florentine historians speak of him as wise, noble, generous. He had no children, and left his estates to the Commune (*Vill* vi 61, vii 9, *Malesp* c 185-187). Dante must be assumed to have known personally what the historians pass over in silence, the same holds good of Tegghiaio, of the family of the Adimari, who had joined Guido Guerra in his counsels of prudence before Montaperti (*Vill* vi 77, *Malesp* c. 170).

The other who beside me treads the earth 40  
     Was Aldobrandi Tegghiaio named;  
     High in the world should still resound his worth.  
 And I, who with them am thus pained and shamed,  
     Jacopo Rusticucci was, and know,  
     My haughty wife was chiefly to be blamed " 45  
 Could I have found some fire-screened way to go,  
     I had myself below among them thrown,  
     And think my Teacher had not said me No,  
 But lest I too as burnt and baked should run,  
     My terror overmastered my good-will, 50  
     That made me eager to embrace each one.  
 Then I began. "Not scorn, but sorrow still,  
     So fixed your sad condition in my mind,  
     That slowly ceaseth it my thoughts to fill,  
 Soon as my Master here had cause assigned, 55  
     In words which quickly made me deem that you  
     Who came were of such worth as now I find.  
 Your countryman am I; with reverence due  
     Your deeds and names, that honour well may suit,  
     I evermore of old both heard and knew, 60  
 I leave the gall and seek the pleasant fruit,  
     Which my true Leader promiseth to me,  
     But first I must plunge down to earth's deep root."  
 "As thou wouldst have thy soul live long to be  
     Thy body's guide," to me was answer given, 65  
     "And thy high fame shine long years after thee,  
 Valour and courtesy, say, have they thriven  
     Within our city as they used of old,  
     Or have they into exile both been driven?

<sup>45</sup> The words point to a tale of misery and shame which commentators illustrate by stories that are better left untold. What has to be remembered is that the kindred and the friends of those of whom Dante wrote such things were still living in Florence, and that every name thus named by him must have made a hundred enemies. And, as the words that follow show, he had no spite against the men, would fain have done them honour, thrown in his lot with them for a time, acknowledged the goodness and greatness of their lives as citizens, and recorded attenuating circumstances. What he did he was compelled to do as the prophet of God's judgments, bearing witness that no gifts or noble deeds can save the victim of impure desire. To preach that vaguely would have fallen on deaf ears. What was wanted was to name the men, as prophets of old had named those whom they condemned (*Jer* xxii 17, 18, 24, xxviii 15, xxix 32).

<sup>61</sup> The "gall" may be either that of the misery of C 1 1-6 or the vices of those from whom he is now parting.

For Guglielmo Borsier, who doth hold, 70  
 New-come, his place of torment with his train,  
 Much grieves our souls with what his words have told "  
 "The upstart race and over-rapid gain  
 Have so given birth to pride and luxury  
 In thee, Firenze, that thou weep'st for pain " 75  
 So I exclaimed with face upturned on high,  
 And then the three, with look as those that hear  
 The truth, so looked on hearing that reply.  
 "If thou dost elsewhere pay no price more dear,"  
 Replied they all, "to grant what others pray, 80  
 Happy art thou, who canst at will speak clear,  
 If then from this dark world thou take thy way,  
 And turn once more the beauteous stars to spy,  
 When thou 'I have been there ' shalt joy to say,  
 Still keep us in our people's memory." 85  
 The circle then they broke, and legs less slow  
 Did seem than wings, so swiftly did they fly.  
 Not sooner from our lips "Amen" could flow  
 Than they in that far distance disappeared,  
 Wherefore my Master deemed it best to go 90  
 I followed him, and soon a spot we neared,  
 Where sound of falling waters came so hoarse,  
 That when we spake our voices scarce were heard.  
 E'en as that stream which takes its separate course,  
 And from Mount Veso eastward first doth flow, 95  
 And down the Apennino's left slope pours,

<sup>70</sup> Borsier, a native of Genoa, who had settled in Florence, and of whom Boccaccio (*Decam* G 1, Nov 8) tells some humorous stories hardly worth repeating, had died in extreme old age in 1300, but a month or two before the assumed date of the poem. Hence the "new-come." He had brought to the men of the *popolo vecchio* the report of the vices of the *popolo nuovo*, with their quick and ill-gotten gains, their luxury and pride, of whom the Cerchi were the chief representatives.

<sup>83</sup> A reminiscence of *Æn* 1 204—

"*Forsan et hæc olim meminisse juvabit*"

The "beauteous stars" and the survival of the love of fame are characteristic touches (*L.* xv 119, xxxiv 139).

<sup>86</sup> The "wheel" is that described in l 21. The three naked forms that had been intertwined limb with limb now pursue their way on their never-ending round.

<sup>95</sup> The reminiscences of travel are fuller and more vivid than usual. Montevoso is one of the Northern Apennines. The Acquacheta is the first stream that flows into the Adriatic, those north of it becoming tributaries to the Po. It falls in a torrent in the gorge between a Benedictine Abbey and that of St. Gaudenzio, in one unbroken stream, like *e.g.* Scale Force, near Derwentwater. Reaching Forlì, it takes the name of Montone, and continues its seaward course. Line 102 has been differently interpreted, there being no noun after the



Which men above as Acquacheta know,  
 Ere it rush down into its torrent bed,  
 And lose that name at Forli far below,  
 Above San Benedetto murmurs dread 100  
 From Alps, whence it in single leap doth run,  
 Where should be room for full a thousand head,  
 Thus headlong, from a bank all broken down,  
 We heard those waters dark so loudly roar,  
 That soon they had had power our ears to stun. 105  
 I had a cord which round my waist I wore,  
 And with it once of old I thought to take  
 The panther with its skin all dappled o'er,  
 And after I its coil all loose did make,  
 Obeying so the bidding of my Guide, 110  
 Coiled and entwined, I gave it as he spake  
 Then turned he to the right, and from the side  
 A little distance hurled its full extent,  
 And flung it down the abyss profound and wide  
 "To this new sign some new and strange event 115  
 Must answer," to myself I made reply,  
 "Since on it thus my Guide looks so intent."  
 Ah me! how careful men should be when nigh  
 To those who see not outward act alone,  
 But inward thoughts discern with wisdom high! 120

"thous ind," (1) as strictly a picture of the scene, the rock-wall affording space for a thousand small cascades, instead of the one big waterfall, (2) as a sarcastic hit at the degenerate condition of the Benedictine Abbey, where there might have been more than a thousand monks, while actually there were but few. "Where should be room for full a thousand thread" would give the former meaning.

107 Assuming the ethical interpretation of the three beasts of C 1 32-54, the panther it will be remembered, represented the sin of sensuality. The "cord" must therefore be the symbol of that which seemed to promise a victory over sensuality, i.e., the rule of an ascetic life. As part of the dress of the Franciscan Order, who were thence known as Cordeliers (C. xxvii 67), it had become the proverbial symbol of that Order. Taken by itself, the passage would imply that at some time or other in his life Dante had become a member of the Tertiary section of the Order, who were outbowed by the stricter vows of poverty and celibacy. Add to this (1) that Buti, one of the earliest commentators, speaks of this, here and on *Par.* xxx 42, as an "undoubted fact," (2) that Dante speaks with more enthusiasm of St. Francis than of any other saint in *Paradise* (*Par.* xi), (3) that Giotto's painting at Assisi represents a figure coming to St. Francis in which we recognise the poet's unmistakable features, and (4) that at his death he was buried, by his own desire, in the dress of the Order, and there remains, I think, sufficient reason to follow *Scart.* and other commentators (see especially *Weg.* 446) in adopting that conclusion. If I am right in thinking that it is in a high degree probable that he met Roger Bacon, the great Franciscan friar, at Oxford, (*Cont. Leo* Nov. 1881) before his exile, we may perhaps look to that as the time when he first girt himself with the symbolic cord. It may be noted that in the vision he wears it just as long as he is in contact with sin of sensuality and no longer. Virgil throws it away, higher ethical teaching dispenses with the outward form. The outward form, so often associated with unreality, seems only, as in what follows, to attract the monstrous symbol of hypocrisy. He can dispense with that now, as afterwards he dispenses even with Virgil's guidance (*Par.*

He said to me, "Soon upward cometh on  
     What I await, and what thy fancies dream  
     Soon to thine eyes full clearly will be shown"  
 Aye to that truth which doth as falsehood seem  
     A man should close his lips as best he may, 123  
     Since him, though blameless, men may base esteem  
 But here I cannot, and by this my lay,  
     This Comedy, dear Reader, do I swear,  
     (So may it win to lengthened fame its way'),  
 I saw, through that thick air obscure and drear, 130  
     A swimming form that upward seemed to sweep,  
     Which well might fill each careless heart with fear,  
 As one doth turn who diveth in the deep  
     To clear an anchor which or rock's rough crest,  
     Or what the sea hides else, below doth keep, 135  
 Who upward stretches, feet close to him pressed.

## CANTO XVII.

*Geryon—The Usurers—The Abyss of Malevolence.*

"SEE there the monster with the pointed tail,  
     Which passeth mountains, walls and arms doth break;  
     See him who fills the whole wide world with bale."  
 So unto me my Guide began and spake,  
     And signalled to him to approach the shore, 5  
     Near the paved path where we our way did take;

xxvii. 142) Other interpreters see in the cord the symbol of fraud, or integrity, or truth, or vigilance, or self-righteousness. And so the reader must decide. The lines which follow show, at any rate, that the poet had some symbolic meaning in his thoughts.

127 The new *formula gerundi* the *Commedia* being to him as a sacred thing, like the relics of a saint, is, one may believe, half earnest and half play. Comp. *Par* xxv. 1

128 The similitude again implies sea travels. Comp. C vii. 13, *Purg* viii. 1-6

1 The name of the monster (Geryon) does not meet us till l. 97. The most noticeable point in the description is the boldness with which Dante throws aside the received image which was associated with the name in Greek and Roman mythology. Geryon was always a three-headed, three-bodied monster (*Æn* viii. 502, *Lucr* v. 58). Dante makes him a human-headed serpent, and the reason is not far to seek. The story of *Gen.* iii. had made the serpent the type of false and fraudulent wisdom, i. e., of hypocrisy, and nothing was more common in the art of Mediaeval Europe than to represent the serpent who tempted Adam with a human face. Ruvkin (*P. C.* xxiv. 14) sees in Geryon the type of the brute and human elements of man's nature in harmony, both being false. Line 2 describes the universal influence of hypocrisy, just as C. i. 31, 100, does that of selfish greed.

And that foul type of guileful fraud came o'er,  
 And to the bank its head and breast it brought,  
 But not upon that bank its tail it bore.  
 Its face was of a man of righteous thought, 10  
 So kindly did its outward aspect show,  
 And all the trunk in serpent's form was wrought.  
 Two hairy paws did from the armpits grow,  
 And on its back and breast and either side  
 Were many a coil and many a knotted bow . 15  
 Nor woof nor warp that with its colours vied  
 Did Turks or Tartars e'er in clothwork weave,  
 Nor tissues such as these Arachne plied.  
 As boats that oft the river's banks receive,  
 And half is in the water, half on land, 20  
 And as in clime where full-fed Gormans live,  
 The beaver for his foray takes his stand ,  
 So in like manner lay that monster low  
 On the stone margin that shuts in the sand  
 In the void space its tail played to and fro, 25  
 Curling on high the forked and vonomed sting,  
 Which, like a scorpion's, armed it 'gainst its foe.  
 Then my Guide spake: "'Tis meet we now should bring  
 Our steps a little from the path astray,  
 Whero that fierce monster all his length doth fling " 30  
 Then on the right we took our downward way,  
 And ten steps took upon the margin's rim,  
 Beyond the sands and falling flames to stay  
 And when we had full nigh approached to him,  
 A little farther on the sand I see 35  
 A new tribe sitting near the hollow's brim ,  
 And then my Master . "That complete may be  
 Thy knowledge of this circle where we tread,  
 Go thou and note well what their destiny.

17 Possibly a reminiscence of descriptions that Dante had heard, or textile work that he had seen, when he came in contact with Marco Polo at Venice (comp C. xxi 7), to which the great traveller returned in 1295 (*id.* 1233). The varied colours, not unlike the pattern of a snake's skin, help out the symbolism of varied and subtle fraud. The story of Arachne comes from Ovid (*Met.* vi 145), and Virgil (*Georg.* iv 245).

18 The poet's ideal imperialism was obviously compatible with a strong dislike to the Teuton as such. For the character given to Germans comp. Shakesp., *Merchant of Venice* 1. 2. The comparison implies travels along the banks of German rivers, probably the Rhine (comp. C. xxiii 63).

19 We enter on the circle of the fraudulent, of whom Geryon was the fit custodian.

Brief let thy words be that shall there be said ; 40  
 And till thou turn, with him converse will I,  
 That he for us his shoulders broad may spread "

So was it on the farthest boundary  
 Of that seventh circle went I all alone,  
 Where sat a people bowed with misery ; 45  
 Out of their eyes their piteous woes were shown,  
 Now here, now there, their hands they made a screen,  
 Now 'gainst the smoke, now 'gainst the hot sand thrown ,  
 Not otherwise in summer dogs are seen  
 Moving or head or foot, when they by bite 50  
 Of fleas, or flies, or gadflies vexed have been.

And when on some I gazed with all my might,  
 On whom the dolorous fire was ever flung,  
 I knew not one, but soon there met my sight

A bag that on the neck of each was hung, 55  
 Each with a certain badge on certain ground,  
 Which from their eyes keen hungry glances wrung ,  
 And as I went among them looking round,  
 Upon a yellow purse I saw azure,  
 In which a lion's face and form were found 60  
 Then going farther on my gazing tour,  
 I saw another full as red as blood,  
 Bearing a goose more white than butter pure ,  
 And one, who bore an azure sow in brood  
 Emblazoned on his little wallet white, 65  
 Said, " Why dost thou on this drear pit intrude ?

<sup>54</sup> The non recognition may be either symbolic, as in C vii 53, or may be meant to indicate that the poet had had no associates in that class of the fraudulent. The special process by which they are identified probably expresses Dante's scorn for the ostentatious heraldry of the *nuovevanti riches* of Florence. Few, if any, of the bearing thus described have found their way into Litta's magnificent volumes on the *Famiglie Celebri Italiane*.

<sup>55</sup> The "purse" of the rich citizens takes the place of the shield of knights. The lion azure on field or identifies the Gianfigliuzzi family of Florence. They were Guelphs, were notorious usurers, and were banished after Montaperti (*Vill* v 39, vi 33-79, viii 39, *Malisp* c 172).

<sup>56</sup> The poet's judgment falls impartially. The goose argent on field gules was borne by the Ubriacchi (Ghibellines) of Florence (*Malisp* c 260, *Vill* v 39, vi 33, 65), of ill repute for the same practice.

<sup>57</sup> The sow azure on field argent belongs, as the sequel shows, to the Paduan family of the Scrovigni. The speaker is probably a Reginald of that family. Stories were told of him which Dante may have heard. (1) That his last counsel to his son was, that in money, and money only, he would find power and strength and safety, (2) that his very last words were, "Give me the key of my chest that no one may find my money" (*Salvatico, Dante a Padova*, 1865, in *Scart*). His son Henry bought the Arena in Padua (1303), and built on it the chapel in which Giotto painted while Dante looked on, as an expiation for his father's sins (*Ruskin, Giotto and his Works*).



And said, "O Geryon, now get o'er the ground ;  
 Wide be thy circuit, gradual thy descent :  
 Think of the burden new that thou hast found "  
 E'en as a little boat from harbour sent 100  
 Goes backward, backward, so he went his way ,  
 And when his huge form for full play found vent,  
 His tail he turned where erst his breast did stay,  
 And, like an eel, that tail outstretched did shake,  
 And with his arms the air before him fray. 105  
 No greater fear, I trow, made men to quake  
 What time that Phaethon let slip the rein,  
 And, as we still see, heaven ablaze did make ;  
 Nor yet when wretched Icarus felt the pain  
 Of the hot wax that left him stripped and bare, 110  
 And his sire cried, "Thou hast an ill path ta'on,"  
 Than mine was, when around me everywhere  
 I looked, and nothing saw but empty space,  
 All vanished, save that monster in the air.  
 Onward he swims along with slow, slow pace, 115  
 Wheeling, descending, yet I know his flight  
 Only by wind that upward meets my face.  
 Already, from the whirlpool on the right,  
 I hear the dread wild tumult that it made,  
 And therefore stretch my head to see the sight ; 120  
 Then was I of the abyss yet more afraid,  
 For flames I saw, and heard a bitter wail ;  
 So, trembling, round its flanks my limbs I laid,  
 And saw, what I to see till then did fail,  
 Our wheeling and descent through each dread sight 125  
 That now on all sides did the sense assail,  
 And as the falcon after lengthened flight,  
 Who, seeing neither bird, nor lure, finds blame,  
 And makes his master cry, "What ! dost alight ?"

<sup>100</sup> The allusion is to the Milky Way, of which one explanation was that it was caused by the sun's wandering from his course when Phaethon drove the chariot of Apollo. In *Conv.* ii. 15 the various theories of the Galaxy are discussed scientifically. The Dædalus and Icarus story had probably been impressed on Dante's mind by Ovid (*Metam.* viii. 203 *et seq.*)

<sup>107</sup> The long descent to the pits of the Malebolge recalls the observation of one who, as a falconer, had watched the movements of his bird with keen delight. See C. xxi. 131, *Purg.* xix. 64, *et al.* The descent into the earlier circles had been practicable for human feet. Here it is at once deeper and steeper. The fall into the sin of the fraudulent is greater and more headlong than that into other forms of evil, and involves a deeper degradation.

Whence quick he started, whels his weary frame 130  
 A hundred times, and settles far apart  
 From where his master stands, in sullen shame,  
 So Geryon in the depth our course did stay  
 Just at the base whence that sheer rock did spring ;  
 And, from the burden freed that on him lay, 135  
 Went off as speeds an arrow from this string.

### CANTO XVIII

*The First Bolgia—The Seducers, Jason and others—The Second Bolgia—  
 The Flatterers.*

A PLACE there is in Hell that bears the name  
 Of Malebolge, all of iron-hued stone,  
 As is the circle which surrounds its frame  
 I' the midst of that malignant region thrown,  
 Yawns wide a well exceeding wide and deep, 5  
 Whose structure shall in season due be shown.  
 Round, then, is that enclosure which doth keep  
 Its place between the pit and that stern shore,  
 And it is cut by ten broad trenches steep  
 As where, to guard a fortress more and more, 10  
 Wide fosses girdle round a castle's height,  
 They form a figure as the eye looks o'er,  
 Just such an image these formed to our sight,  
 And as in such a fortress, from the gates  
 To the outer bank, are flung the bridges light, 15  
 So from the base of rock precipitate  
 Crags started, and o'er dikes and moats made track,  
 On to the pit whers they converge, truncate

<sup>1</sup> The region Malebolge (= evil pits) includes the forms of crime that come, as in the classification of C xi 19-66, under the category of frauds — 1. Seducers, 2. flatterers (C xviii), 3. simonists (C xix), 4. soothsayers (C xx), 5. bribers and bribe takers (C xxi, xxii), 6. hypocrites (C xxiii), 7. robbers (C xxiv, xxv), 8. evil counsellors (C xxvi, xxvii), 9. slanderers (C xxviii, xxix), 10. forgers and coiners (C xxx, xxxi). The sin of the traitor is reserved for the ninth and last circle.

<sup>2</sup> As with the city of Dis in C viii 1-27, so here, the picture is drawn from the aspect of a mediæval fortress. Here, however, there are ten circular moats (there are instances of three moats, but I do not remember any city with ten) and ten dikes, not of hewn stone, but rough rock, and rock-bridges, lead with a slight descent from one to the other.

Within this place, down shaken from the back  
 Of Geryon, we found us, and the Bard 20  
 Turned to the left, I following on his track.  
 There, on our right, new woes the prospect marred,  
 New torments there, and novel scourgers too,  
 Which that first Bolgia did within it guard ;  
 Below, the sinners naked came in view, 25  
 And this side from the midst our path they crossed ,  
 On that, with us, but swifter course pursue.  
 E'en as the Romans, for the countless host  
 That cross the bridge in year of Jubilee,  
 Of their new way of passing o'er may boast ; 30  
 For on one side all turn their face to see  
 The Castle, as to Peter's shrine they go,  
 And on the other to the Mount move free.  
 This side and that, along the dark rock's brow,  
 Saw I horned demons with great scourge in hand, 35  
 Who with it on their backs laid many a blow.  
 Ah me ! how soon they made that tortured band  
 At the first stroke lift up their legs, and none  
 To wait a second or a third would stand.  
 And as I went my glances fell on one, 40  
 Whom soon as I perceived, I to him said,  
 "Not for the first time now that face I've known"  
 Wherefore to see him clear my feet I stayed,  
 And my sweet Master would with me abide,  
 And to my turning back no hindrance made 45  
 And he, that scourged one, thought himself to hide,  
 Lowering his face , but little that availed,  
 For said I, "Thou whose eyes to earth are tied,  
 Unless thy face to tell the truth hath failed,  
 Venedigo Caccianimico thou art, 50  
 But what to such sharp pickle thee hath haled ?"

<sup>28</sup> The picture is obviously drawn from a reminiscence of what Dante had seen during his visit or pilgrimage to Rome in 1300 (his formal mission was in 1301), which Boniface VIII had proclaimed as a year of jubilee (*Vita* viii 36, *Weg* 140). What had struck him was the ordered march of a great multitude (more than 2,000,000 were in Rome during the greater part of the year), each keeping to the rule of the road, as they crossed the Tiber towards the Castle of St Angelo. "The Mount" has been identified with the Monte Gianicolo, or the Moote Giordano. As the Church of St Pietro in Montorio stands on a spur of the former, and would naturally be one of the shrines visited by the pilgrims, it fits in better with the picture than the slight elevation, unknown to fame, of Monte Giordano (see Barlow *ib* loc.). For another reference to the Jubilee, compare *Par* xxxi 104.

<sup>50</sup> The tale of baseness is briefly told. The Caccianimico (the name is sufficiently char-



And he - "Against my will I that impart,  
 But thy clear accents do my speech constrain,  
 And waken old-world memories in my heart.  
 'Twas I that fair Ghisola's heart did gain 55  
 The proud Marchese's will in all to bear,  
 However men that story foul explain.  
 Nor of Bologna I alone weep here,  
 Nay, with them rather so is filled the place,  
 That not as many are the lips taught there, 60  
 'Twixt Reno and Savena, *Sipa's* phrase  
 And if of this thou askest evidence,  
 Our greedy spirit in thy mind retrace"  
 And, as he spake, a demon drove him thence  
 With knotted scourge, and said, "Away, away, 65  
 Pander; no women here are sold for pence."  
 I then drew back to where my Guide did stay,  
 And then a few steps farther we passed by,  
 Where from the bank a bold rock forced its way.  
 With nimble feet upon it we leapt high, 70  
 And on its ridge then turning to the right,  
 Ceased on those timeless rounds our path to try  
 When we came there, where, underneath the height,  
 Opens a path, where those poor scourged ones go,  
 My Master said, "Take good heed to the sight 75  
 Of those, the others born for sin and woe,  
 Of whom thou hast not seen as yet the face,  
 Because with us they walked in even row."  
 From the old bridge we saw towards us pace,  
 As from the other side, another band, 80  
 Whom in like mode the cruel scourge did chase

acteristic of the time) were a noble family of Bologna. Venedico was Podesta of Milan in 1286. His sister (Ghisola) was famed for her beauty. He, to gain the favour of his patron, Azzo or Opizzo d'Este, Marquis of Ferrara, gave him, for "value received," (p. 66), facilities for her seduction (*Scart*). Line 57 implies a personal knowledge, on Dante's part, of a story of which there were many floating versions. The term "pickle," which in any language, as in English, might be a natural equivalent for "trouble," had a local significance in Bologna, where a waste pit outside the city near S. Maria in Monte was known as the *Salsa*. Rubbings and filth of all kinds were thrown in, and the bodies of infamous criminals were left there to rot. It was, as it were, the Gehenna of Bologna, and the extreme reproach of Bolognese Billingsgate was, "Your father was thrown to the *Salsa*" (*Beni Ramò* 10 *Scart*).

60 *Sipa*, for *sia* or *si*, seems to have been a Bolognese shibboleth. The Reno and the Savena are two rivers flowing from the Apennines into a branch of the Po, and forming the natural boundaries of the Bolognese territory (Joan de Vurg *Ecl.* 11 1).

63 Dante had been at Bologna as a student, and had known the vices of its citizens.

My Master kind, not waiting for demand,  
 Said to me, "See yon lofty form draw near,  
 Who sheds no tear, though sorely pained he stand ?  
 What kingly greatness still doth linger there !  
 That same is Jason, who by craft and skill  
 From Colchian shores the wondrous ram did bear  
 By Lemnos' isle he passed in moment ill,  
 When the bold women, by fierce daring pressed,  
 Swore all their males in ruthless rage to kill.  
 With tokens there and words full subtly dressed  
 Hypsipyle he cheated, maiden fair,  
 Who had already cheated all the rest.  
 Forlorn and great with child, he left her there.  
 Such crime now dooms him to such punishment  
 Medea too finds ample vengeance here  
 With him are those who use like blandishment  
 Let it suffice thee thus much of this glen  
 To know, and those who in its jaws are pent "  
 Already stood we where the strait path then  
 Crosses the second causeway, passing o'er,  
 And forms a buttress arching o'er the den.  
 There heard we moans and cries of travail sore  
 In the next pit, from those who snort in pain,  
 And with their hands themselves smite evermore  
 Its sloping banks a crusted scurf did stain,  
 Formed by the vapours clinging from below,  
 Which both o'er eyes and nose doth mastery gain  
 So deep the bottom is, that nought doth show,  
 Unless one mounteth to the arch's span,  
 Where the rock forward most its mass doth throw  
 Thither we came, and thence, where deep fosse ran,  
 I saw a tribe in such filth suffocate,  
 As festers in draught houses made by man.

<sup>88</sup> Jason, the leader of the Argonauts, with his double seduction (1) of Hypsipyle, queen of Lemnos, who had "cheated" her countrywomen by rescuing her father, Thoas, from the massacre of all Lemnian males, on which they had resolved, and (2) of Medea of Colchis, whom he abandoned for Creusa, appears as the great seducer of antiquity

<sup>104-113</sup> We pass from the seducers to the flatterers, wallowing as it were, in their own filth. Of the *Intermetei* (abbreviation of "*Intermetelli*") here named, little is known but that he was of the party of the Bianchi at Lucca (*Vill* viii 46). History records nothing more about him, but the early commentators, building probably upon Dante's text, describe him,

And whilst I sought with glance to penetrate,  
 One I beheld with head so foul with mire,  
 I could not tell if lay or priest his state.  
 He cried to me, "Why dost thou so desire  
 Rather on me than my foul mates to gaze?"  
 And I to him: "Because, with tresses drier,  
 If memory serve, I knew thee in old days.  
 Alessio Interminè! I note,  
 Of Lucca, hence on thee my vision stays  
 More than the rest." Then, as his pate he smote,  
 "Thy flattering words," he said, "have sunk me low,  
 Wherewith was never surfeited my throat."  
 And then my Guide: "Take heed that thou bend now  
 Thy head a little forward, that thine eyes  
 May reach to look upon that face, and know  
 That foul dishevelled strumpet who there lies,  
 And tears her flesh with nails in foul filth dyed,  
 And now stands up, now sitteth squatting-wise.  
 Thais is she, the harlot, who replied,  
 Her lover asking, 'Dost thou thank me then  
 Truly?' 'Ah! yes, and wondrously beside'  
 Enough for this our gaze be what we've seen"

## CANTO XIX.

*The Third Bolgia—The Simonists—Pope Nicolas III—Church Corruptions*

O SIMON MAGUS! O ye wretched crew!  
 Who things of God, that should be brides of good,  
 To your own greed adulterate anew,

some as a flatterer, specially of women, some as the keeper of a brothel (*Buti, Beniv, Jac, Dant in Scart*)

<sup>120</sup> A yet fouler picture comes from the Thais of the *Eunuchus* of Terence. The precise form of the flattering speech which turned Daote's stomach was that when she received from her lover's messenger the gift which he had sent her, she had sent back word that she valued it above all others because it came from him. We can hardly doubt, I imagine, that the poet had in his mind a Thais of later date, belonging to Florence or Bologna. The picture seems drawn from the *Vulg. of Eccius* ix. 10.

<sup>1</sup> In entering the circle of the Simonists (this sin taking its name from the history of Acts viii. 20) the pilgrim found himself face to face with what was, by the confession of Papal as well as Protestant historians, the canker of the Mediæval Church. Men looked to spiritual functions as things which could be bought for money, which might be used to make it. The modern form of traffic in livings is bad enough, but it is guarded, by the very publicity of its conditions, from some of the worst evils which attended its older working. From Dante's standpoint the temporal accidents of those spiritual functions were consecrated, as the nuns that were the brides of Christ were consecrated, not to be polluted by the touch of unclean hands.

By lust of silver and of gold subdued ;  
 Now is it meet the trump for you to sound,      5  
 Who in that Bolgia third in order stood.  
 Already on the next sepulchral mound  
 We had ascended to the mid-crag's height,  
 Whence a plumb-line goes down the abyss profound  
 O Sovran Wisdom ! what strange skill and might      10  
 Thou show'st in Heaven and earth and that world drear,  
 And with what justice orderest all things right !  
 I saw within the sides and bottom there  
 The livid rock all pierced with many a hole,  
 All of one size, and each did round appear.      15  
 Nor less nor greater seemed they, on the whole,  
 Than those which, in my beautiful St. John,  
 Are formed, where priests baptize each infant soul,  
 Whereof, not many years back, I broke one,  
 To save a child that lay a-drowning there      20  
 Let this be proof that men may falsehood shun.  
 Out of the mouth of each I saw appear  
 A sinner's feet, and upward to the thigh  
 The legs, all else was in that prison drear.  
 With all of them the feet in agony      25  
 And joints were writhing in the fierce fire's throes,  
 They would have burst all bands and withes that tie  
 E'en as of things well oiled the fiery glow  
 Is wont to spread o'er all the surface wide,  
 So was it with these men from heel to toe.      30

<sup>17</sup> The reminiscence of the exile is singularly touching. The octagonal Baptistery of St. John at Florence comes before his mind. In it there stood four fountains, about three or four feet deep. A Florentine tradition reports that a boy of Florence, Antonio de' Caviccioni, in the crowd that was gathered on the Saturday before Easter (i.e., on the self same day which we have now reached in the poem) for lighting their tapers at the sacred fire, fell into one of these fountains, and was extricated by Dante, who did not hesitate to break it (*Comme Anon in Scart*). Apparently his enemies had twisted this into something like a charge of sacrilege. The date is not fixed, but the "not many years" point to a time before he left Florence, and possibly during his tenure of office as one of the Priors. The old fountains were removed in 1576 (*Lubin*).

<sup>22</sup> The form of punishment is, like all others, symbolic. They—it is noticeable that the only simonists named are Popes—had inverted the true order of the spiritual society, and now they themselves are in their pits head downwards. Their brows might have gained the aureole of saints, and now their feet glow, varying in their fiery red according to their baseness, as those aureoles vary with the degrees of sanctity, with the flames of Hell. It falls in with this symbolism that to be buried alive with the head downward was the mediæval punishment of assassins. Dante may have heard the cries of a victim so punished asking for a confessor, for the sake even of a few moments' delay.

"Who is that, Master, by such torment tried,  
 Who writhes himself above all others there,  
 O'er whom," said I, "a redder flame doth glide?"

And he to me: "If thou wilt let me bear  
 Thee down along the bank that lies most low, 35  
 Thou from himself of his own sin shalt hear."

And I. "My will with thy good-will doth go,  
 Thou art my Lord, and know'st I never slight  
 Thy will, and what I speak not thou dost know"

Then came we to the fourth embankment's height; 40  
 We turned, and on the left hand wound our way  
 Down to the narrow pit, with holes bedight,

Nor did my master put my weight away  
 From off his hip till by the hole we stood  
 Of him whose legs went writhing so alway. 45

"Whoe'er thou be whose head is downward bowed,  
 O doleful soul, like stake in earth deep driven,  
 Speak if thou can'st," so spake I out aloud

As stands the friar-confessor, who hath shriven  
 The base assassin, who, when fixed aright, 50  
 Recalls him, that some respite brief be given,

I stood he cried. "And stand'st thou there upright,  
 Stand'st thou already here, O Boniface?

By many years my scroll hath erred from right,  
 Has that ill gain so soon lost all its grace, 55  
 For which thou didst not fear by fraud to seize

The beauteous bride and work her foul disgrace?"

So stood I then, as men stand ill at ease,  
 Failing to see what meant the answers made,  
 As mocked, not knowing how to answer these 60

<sup>48</sup> The first of the Papal simonists is Pope Nicolas III (1277-80), whom Villani (vii 54) describes as avaricious and worldly, bent on amassing wealth for himself and his kindred, and openly practising simony. Villani, it will be remembered, was a Guelph historian (see *Matth. L. C.* xi 4, *Matth. C.* 218).

<sup>49</sup> Dante, looking to the assumed date of his vision (1300), could not place Boniface, who was then living in Hell. He finds an ingenious way of evading the difficulty in the fore-ought which, as in *C.* vi. 65, x 94-108, he assigns to the spirits of the lost. Nicolas knows that Boniface is to join him and his companions, but had not expected him for some years to come (Boniface d. 1303), and is therefore startled by what he takes to be his arrival.

<sup>50</sup> The "fraud" refers to the influences by which Boniface had brought about Celestine V.'s abdication. The "beauteous bride," as in *L.* 3, is the Church of Christ.

Then, "Tell him quickly, quickly," Virgil said,  
 "I am not he, not he whom thou dost guess."  
 And I, as he commanded me, obeyed.  
 Then writhed his feet that soul, in sore distress,  
 And sighing, with sad voice of deepest woe 66  
 Said to me, "What then bidd'st thou me confess?  
 If thou'rt so eager who I am to know,  
 That thou hast therefore by the bank come down,  
 Know that round me the sacred robe did flow,  
 I as the she-bear's son was truly known, 70  
 So eager to increase the bear-cubs' store;  
 There money, here myself, in purse I've thrown.  
 Beneath my head are dragged a many more,  
 My predecessors, stained with Simon's sin,  
 Now crushed where fissures through the hard rock bore. 75  
 I too shall downward fall when he shall win  
 His way here, who I thought had come in thee,  
 When I my sudden questions did begin.  
 But longer time my feet thus blistered be,  
 Longer have I been here, feet over head, 80  
 Than he shall stand with feet red-hot to see.  
 For after him comes one of fouler deed  
 From Western clime, a pastor without law,  
 Who him and me alike shall supersede.  
 Another Jason he, such as we saw 85  
 In Maccabees; and as on him his king  
 Then smiled, so shall the prince who France doth awe

<sup>70</sup> The words play upon the family name of the Pope, Orsini, the "bear-whelps," the "bear" figuring conspicuously on their coat of arms (*Litt. s. v.*). The grim sarcasm of the poet paints him as being in death what he had been in life. He was always putting money into his purse, now he has put himself

<sup>75</sup> Thus, then, was Dante's summing up of the history of the Papacy for many centuries. There was scarcely even an exception to prove the rule.

<sup>80</sup> The prediction of course implies that the Canto, or this passage in it, was written after the death of Clement V in 1314. For the death of Boniface see *Par.* ax. 90. There were twenty-three years between the deaths of Nicolas and Boniface, there should be little more than ten between those of Boniface and Clement V (*d.* April 1314). Benedict IX., whose short pontificate (*d.* 1304) came between the two, is designedly passed over as exempt from the vices of those who went before and followed him (*Vill.* viii. 80).

<sup>85</sup> Bertrand del Gatto, Archbishop of Bordeaux, chosen as Pope Clement V., was a Gascon by birth. Every act of his must have seemed to Dante misquitos and disastrous. He transferred the Papacy from Rome to Avignon, and so began the seventy years of Babylonian exile, made himself the servile instrument of Philip the Fair in the suppression of the Knights Templars, and was besides conspicuous for simony, nepotism, and personal profligacy (*Vill.* viii. 80, ix. 50, *Milm. L. C.* vii. 171-324). Of him we hear again in *Par.* xvii. 88 as having tricked Henry VII. with fair promises which were not kept, and his doom is again proclaimed in *Par.* aax. 143-148. For a brief moment Dante too had been deceived like the Emperor (*d.* 5), and the fact that he had been tricked gave a fresh bitterness to his indignation.

<sup>88</sup> Jason (Greek substitute for Joshua) is the apostate priest of a *Macc.* i. 8, iv. 13-19.

Treat this one." I scarce knew if 'twere a thing  
 Too bold, but I to him in verse replied :  
 "Tell me, I pray thee, what great sum to bring 90  
 Our Lord bade Peter ere He would confide  
 The sacred keys into his custody !  
 Truly no more than 'Follow me' He cried ;  
 Nor those with Peter bade Matthias buy  
 With gold or silver, when by lot he gained 95  
 The place the false soul lost by treachery.  
 Therefore stay here ; thou righteously art pained ;  
 And keep thou well thy money basely earned,  
 Which thee to boldness against Charles constrained.  
 And were it not I have not quite unlearned 100  
 My awe and reverence for those keys supreme,  
 Which by thy hands in yon glad life were turned,  
 I would use words that harsher far would seem,  
 Because your avarice fills the world with woe,  
 Crushing the good, and those of vile esteem 105  
 Upraising You the Evangelist did show,  
 Ye shepherds, when the harlot he displayed  
 Who, by the streams, doth kings as lovers know ;  
 She who with seven heads born was there portrayed,  
 Who from the ten horns did her strength renew, 110  
 As long as she the Bridegroom's law obeyed.

who made himself the tool of Antiochus Epiphanes by stealthily corrupting all that kept Israel as a separate people The king of France is Philip IV the Fair (1268-1314)

90 In the burning words that follow we hear the prophet rather than the poet To us the words have lost something of their power through long familiarity, through the mitigation of the evil We have to think of them and of the courage which their utterance implied, as they came in all their incisive force from Dante's pen (For 195, see *Acts* 1:26) The poet, in the spirit of a true reformer, falls back from the corruptions of later ages upon the pattern of the Apostolic Church

95 The words refer to the secret transactions that preceded the massacre of the Sicilian Vespers Nicolas III was irritated with Charles of Anjou, king of Naples, for having refused a proposal of marriage between his nephew and the Pope's niece John of Procida, after visiting the Emperor John Palaeologus at Constantinople, came in the disguise of a Franciscan friar to Rome and persuaded the Pope with large bribes to enter into negotiations with Peter III of Arragon, the outcome of which was the revolt in Sicily and the consequent overthrow of French dominion in that island (*Vell* vii 54-57, *Malisp* c 218-220 in *Scart*, and *Amari, War of the Sicilian Vespers*, passim)

100 The whole passage that follows was suppressed by the Spanish Inquisition (Sotomayor, *Index Librorum Prohib*, p 324, Madrid, 1667)

105 The author of the *De Monarchia* has not quite laid aside his reverence for the Papal ideal, bitter as he may be against those who have corrupted it The Empire and the Church, each with defiled rights under its own ruler, were to his theory essential conditions of a true polity, and therefore of human happiness

110 The words have the interest of being a mediæval interpretation of *Rev* xviii 1-15, in which, however, the harlot and the beast seem somewhat strangely blended The harlot is the corrupted Church of Rome, the seven heads are the seven hills on which the city is built, or

Silver and gold are now made gods by you,  
 And what divides you from the Paynim wild?  
 Ye worship hundreds, he to one is true.  
 Ah! Constantine, what evil came as child, 115  
 Not of thy change of creed, but of the dower  
 Of which the first rich Father thee beguiled!"  
 And while my song such notes as these did pour,  
 As anger or remorse his soul did sting,  
 Both feet he writhed as though in torment sore. 120  
 I think my Guide was pleased as I did sing,  
 With such contented lip he still did list  
 The sound of words that had a truthful ring.  
 Then both his arms around me he did twist,  
 And when he had me fast upon his breast, 125  
 Retraced our downward path, nor footstep missed,  
 Nor was he with that weight of mine oppressed,  
 But to the summit of the arch did bear,  
 Where the fourth dike upon the fifth doth rest.  
 Gently he laid his burden from him there, 130  
 Gently upon the rugged rock and ateepe,  
 Which wild goats would have found it hard to clear:  
 Then was disclosed another valley deep.

perhaps, with an entirely different exegesis, the seven gifts of the Spirit, or the seven sacraments with which that Church had in its outset been endowed, the ten horns are the ten commandments. As long as the Church was faithful to her Spouse, she had the moral strength which came from those gifts and the Divine Law which she represented (*Pré Dante in Scart*). When that failed, she became as a harlot, and her whoredom with kings was the symbol of her alliance with secular powers for the oppression of the nations. Comp C. I. 100.

115 An echo of *Hor* viii 4

115 The words imply the mediæval legend of the donation of Constantine, on which Dante dwells in *Mon* ii 12, iii 10. The Emperor, it was said, had been cleaved from leprosy by Pope Sylvester II, and as a thank-offering transferred Rome and its adjacent territory to the Papal See (comp C. xxvii 94). The so-called donation was published with the false decretals by the pseudo-Isidore. Its spuriousness was first exposed by Lorenzo Vallo (see Dollinger, *Die Papst-fabeln des Mittelalters*, p. 52). The passage is memorable as having been quoted by Milton in his *Reformation in England*.

117 From Dante's standpoint Constantine might give territory, but could not alienate one jot or tittle of imperial prerogative (*Mon* iii 10).

124 The ever recurring tenderness of Virgil in supporting the pilgrim over rough places may be only a touch of the poet's personal affection for him, but probably it is also a symbol of the light and strength which he had found in Virgil's teaching when the corruptions of the Church weighed heavily on his mind. His "feet had well nigh slipped," when some lines from the *Æneid* came to his mind and kept him steadfast.



## CANTO XX.

*The Fourth Bolgia—The Soothsayers—Ampharaos and Others.*

Now of new torments must my verses tell,  
 Which to the twentieth canto subject lent  
 Of this first poem of those plunged in Hell ;  
 Already was I gazing, all intent,  
 To look all down the pit that open lay, 5  
 All bathed in tears of anguish and lament.  
 Through the round vale I saw a people stray,  
 Silent and weeping, and with solemn pace,  
 Like litany processions, wend their way.  
 And as my glance went farther down in space, 10  
 Each seemed to me distorted wondrously  
 From the chest upwards even to the face ;  
 For to the reins each looked with back-turned eye,  
 And could not help but he must backward go,  
 For none what lay before him could espy. 15  
 It may be that by palsy's withering blow  
 Some have been turned in fashion as I saw ,  
 But I ne'er knew, nor deem it can be so.  
 If God shall grant thee, Reader dear, to draw  
 Due fruit from what thou readest, think how I 20  
 Could dry-eyed look upon that doom of awe,  
 When this our human shape I saw come nigh,  
 So twisted that the tears their eyes did weep  
 Fell down the epine, nor left the haunches dry.  
 Certes I wept, and leant against the steep 25  
 Of the hard rock, so that to me my Guide  
 Said, " Art thou still as those whose wit doth sleep ?

<sup>1</sup> The new torments are those of the fourth Bolgia, the prison of the soothsayers. The "litany processions" may, like C. xviii. 38, be a reminiscence of the jubilee at Rome, but the sight was, of course, a common one throughout Italy. The application of the term *Canzon*, commonly used by Dante of shorter poems, to each part of the *Comms*, is worth noting.

<sup>2</sup> The symbolism is obvious. Those who had sought by unlawful means to look too far ahead, and had been full of "great swelling words of vanity," are condemned to look behind them, not seeing their own way, and to walk in perpetual silence.

<sup>3</sup> The words find a distinct echo in Milton, *P. L.* xi. 494

Here piety lives when pity's self hath died.  
 Who is more sunk in wickedness than he  
 Whom, from God's judgment, passion turns aside? 30  
 Lift up thy head, lift up; yon sufferer see,  
 For whom earth in the Thebans' sight oped wide;  
 Wherefore all cried, 'Ah! whither dost thou flee,  
 Amphiaras? Why from war dost hide?'  
 He, till he reached the bottom, never stayed, 35  
 Where Minos sits, by whom each soul is tried.  
 See for a breast he has his shoulders made,  
 For since he sought to see too far before,  
 He looks behind, and walks with backward tread.  
 See, too, Tiresias, who changed semblance bore, 40  
 When he, from male, a female form did gain,  
 And every limb in altered fashion wore,  
 And he had need to strike the serpents twain  
 With that his rod, when they were all entwined,  
 Ere he man's special plumcs could wear again. 45  
 To his paunch Aruns turns his parts behind,  
 Who in the hills of Luni, where they plough  
 Who 'neath Carrara's rocks their dwelling find,  
 Had a wide cave within the white rock's brow,  
 And in it dwelt, nor failed him then the sight 50  
 Of stars of heaven and great sea's waves below.  
 And she who hides her bosom from the light  
 With tresses loose, so that thou see'st no more,  
 Who on that side with hair is covered quite,

<sup>28</sup> The double meaning of the Italian *pieta* (reproduced in *Par* iv 105) is scarcely reproducible in English. The thought is the keynote to all that most startles us in the *Inferno*. The mind that cannot accept the Divine punishment of evil is not rightly trained in the discipline of the Divine holiness, and the thought that that punishment was for the great mass of mankind simply retributive was, it need scarcely be said, the dominant thought of medieval, as it has since been of Protestant, theology.

<sup>29</sup> Amphiaras, like Apaneus (C. xiv 62) was one of the "Seveo against Thebes," and Danto's knowledge of them comes from the same source, chiefly from Statius. Knowing by his divinations that the siege would be fatal to him, he hid himself, but his retreat was betrayed to Polynices by his wife Enphyle, and he was forced to join in the attack. A thunderbolt struck him, the earth opened and he was swallowed up (*Stat. Theb.* vii 690-823). The cry of the Thebans connects that catastrophe tauntingly with his former concealment.

<sup>30</sup> The story of the change of sex in Tiresias is found in Ovid, *Metam.* iii 320-345. He passed from man to woman so striking with his rod two serpents that were entwined together. Seven years afterwards he regained his manhood by a like process.

<sup>31</sup> Aruns appears in Lucan (i 386) as an Etruscan seer who foretold the war between Caesar and Pompeius and the triumph of the former. Luni is the city in the Carrara region which gives its name to the district of the Lunigiana, the territory of the Malaspina, one of whom, Moroello, was Dante's friend and host.

Manto she is, who many a land roamed o'er, 55  
 And came at last to rest where I was born :  
 Wherefore I wish that thou shouldst hear my lore  
 After her father's life was spent and worn,  
 And Bacchus' city tasted slavery,  
 Long time she wandered through the world forlorn. 60  
 A lake there is in our fair Italy  
 At the Alp's foot that shuts Lamagna in,  
 Benaco, where the Tyrol low doth lie.  
 By thousand streams and more the Apennine,  
 I trow, is bathed, which in the lake are pent 65  
 Camonica and Garda's bounds within ,  
 A place there is midway, where he of Trent  
 Chief Shepherd, and Verona's, Brescia's too,  
 Might each give blessing if that way he went ,  
 There Peschiera's fortress, bulwark true 70  
 To face the strength of them of Bergamo  
 And Brescia, where a lower shore we view ,  
 There needs must be that all the waters go,  
 Which fair Benaco's bosom fails to hold,  
 And through green pastures like a river flow. 75  
 Soon as the current leaves its channel old,  
 No more Benaco, Mincio is it styled,  
 Till at Governo with the Po 'tis rolled ;

<sup>55</sup> In the story of Manto we have a long and detailed legend of which no trace has been found in any classical or mediæval writer. The poet was obviously attracted to the legend by its connection with Mantua as the birthplace of Virgil. Virgil himself (*Æn.* x 198-201) makes Ocnus, the son of Manto, who was the daughter of Tiresias, the founder of the city. In *Purg.* xxii 113, curiously enough, Dante places the daughter of Tiresias (Stat. *Theb.* iv 463) in the *limbus* of C. iv. The city of Bacchus is Thebes, which after the defeat of the Seven came under the power of Creon.

<sup>61</sup> The description speaks of an intimate acquaintance with the whole of the Benaco (= Lago di Garda) district. Lamagna = Germany. Garda, which now gives its name to the lake, is on its right hand in the Veronese territory. The Apennino (with *v. l. Pennino*) has but the coincidence of name with the Apennine chain that forms the backbone of Italy. The Val Camonica is one of the greatest valleys of Lombardy, more than fifty miles in length, and runs from the ridge of Tonale to Bormio, ending in the lake Isco. The limits of the Apeauine given include great part of the hill country east of the lake.

<sup>67</sup> The spot is further defined from an intimate local knowledge as being the meeting-point of the diocese of the Bishops of Treviso, Brescia, and Verona, probably the island *Isola de' Frati*, near the point of Manerba, or at the mouth of the *Signalgar*.

<sup>70</sup> Peschiera, then, as in later times, one of the great fortresses of the Lombard quadrilateral. At the time when Dante wrote, it was in the hands of his patron, Can Gracide of Verona, and hence the significance of his speaking of it as defying Brescia and Bergamo, who were allied against him. Peschiera stands near the lower end of the lake. Below this, the name Benaco is lost, and the Mincio flows out of the lake, and forms three artificial lakes, separated from each other by embankments and connected by bridges, that encompass the present city of Mantua. After this it again flows on as the Lower Mincio, and flows into the Po at Governolo. It is obvious that such a scene may have presented the idea of the arrangement of Malebolge (*xviii* 1-18.) Of the historical associations connected with the meeting of Attila and Pope Leo I. at Mantua, Dante says nothing.

Nor far it runs before a low waste wild  
 It finds, and spreads into a marshy lake, 80  
 And taints the summer with its mist defiled.  
 There saw the ruthless maid, as she did take  
 Her way, a field where never passed the share,  
 In the mid-marsh, where none their home did make ;  
 There, that her life apart from men might fare, 85  
 She with her servants lived to work her art,  
 And left untenanted her carcass there  
 Then men who, scattered round, had dwelt apart,  
 Were gathered to that place, defended well  
 By the wide swamp that girt its every part, 90  
 O'er her dead bones they reared their citadel,  
 And, for her sake who first did choose the place,  
 As fittest name, their choice on Mantua fell.  
 Of old they were a far more crowded race,  
 Ere Casalodi's blindness had received 95  
 From Pinamonte's fraud such sore disgrace ;  
 Therefore I warn thee, lest thou be deceived,  
 If otherwise my city's birth be told  
 For truth let no such falsehood be believed."  
 And I: "O Master, of such worth I hold 100  
 Those words of thine, and so my faith they gain,  
 All else to me were but as embers cold.  
 But of the tribe that passes, tell me plain  
 If thou see'st any worthy special note ,  
 Only for that would I attention strain " 105  
 Said he to me, "See him who from his throat  
 Lets fall his beard upon his shoulders swarth ;  
 When Greece of old sent all her males afloat,  
 And empty cradles mourned their children's dearth,  
 He was an augur, and with Calchas told, 110  
 In Aulis, when the first rope should leave earth—

<sup>80</sup> The story as told by chroniclers (*Murat* xx 722, in *Scart*) is that the Casalodi were Guelph counts and lords of Mantua, that Pinamonte de' Buonacorsi, a Mantuan, alarmed the Count Albert with rumours of conspiracies, persuaded him to take oppressive measures of precaution, and then went among the Mantuans and stirred them to a revolt, which ended in the expulsion of the Count

<sup>89</sup> The special attestation is perhaps emphasised on account of the discrepancy already noticed between the stories of the *Æneid* and the *Inferno* as to Mantua.

Eurypylyus his name; and so of old  
 My lofty drama sings in certain place;  
 Thou know'st it well, whose mind the whole doth hold.  
 That other there, whose ribs fill scanty space, 115  
 Was Michael Scott, who truly full well knew  
 Of magical deccents the illusive grace.  
 Guido Bonatti, yea, Asdente too  
 Thou see'st, who now would fain the thong and thread  
 Have plied—too late he doth his folly rue. 120  
 Those wretched ones thou see'st, who needle fled,  
 And spool and spindle, witches to become,  
 With herbs and idols their profane art sped.  
 But now come on, for hastens to his home  
 Cain with his thorns, where meet each hemisphere, 125  
 And by Seviglia dips in ocean's foam.  
 And lo! last night the moon did round appear;  
 Well shouldst thou mind it, for it served not ill  
 Ofttimes thy wanderings through the forest drea! "  
 So spake he to me, and we went on still. 130

112 Eurypylyus appears in conjunction with Calchas in the tale of Simon, in *JEn* ii 113, as a Greek soothsayer.

118 Michael Scott (d 1290). Over and above the local legends which the *Lay of the Last Minstrel* has made familiar to most English readers, the name of the great Scotch wizard had not a few points of contact with parts of Italian history in which Dante would feel much interest. He prophesied the fortunes of Can Grande (*Vill* x 101, 148), he practised astrology at the court of Frederick II at Bologna (Jac della Lana), he felt the decline and fall of Florence—"Non diu stabit solida Florentia florum"—*Scart*. The date of his death makes it possible that Dante may have met him. At any rate, his fame would have lingered at Bologna, probably also at Paris and Oxford, when Dante studied in those cities. It may be noted further, (1) that he was befriended by Gregory IX, (2) that Fabonacci, the great mathematician of the 13th century, dedicated a treatise to him, (3) that he studied at Oxford, Paris, and Toledo, and made translations from Averroes, (4) that Pope Honorius gave him leave to hold two benefices in England (*Kingdon*, ii 283 441, 445-451). Roger Bacon, on the other hand, speaks scornfully of him as a pretender to science, and this may have influenced Dante's judgment, (*Op Tert* i 25). Comp *Phil* in loc.

119 Of the two whose memory survives chiefly in this line, Guido Bonatti was an astrologer of Forlì of the 13th century, consulted mainly by Count Guido di Montefeltro and other Ghibelline leaders, whose plans were said to have been guided by him to a successful issue. He wrote a treatise on astrology which was much studied even by women (*Murat* xxii 150, 233-237 in *Scart*). Asdente, "the cobbler of Parma," as he is called in *Conv* iv 26, 14 there named incidentally, as illustrating the difference between notoriety and true fame. Line 119 seems like a literal application of the familiar proverb *Ne sutor ultra crepidam*. Possibly it had vexed the soul of the poet to find the fame of the cobbler-wizard overshadowing his own.

121 The witches thus described, true descendants of the Canidia of Horace (*Epod* v), were to be found in every town and village in Italy. The *modus operandi* had been handed down from a remote prehistoric past. Mould a waxen image to represent the person over whom the spell is to be cast—prick it with pins, or let it melt slowly before a fire, and pain and wasting will be the victim's portion. The "herbs" imply love potions, or the reverse. Practically such women often carried on a direct trade in poisoning.

122 The two hemispheres, it must be remembered, in Dante's cosmography were those of which Jerusalem and the Mount of Purgatory were respectively the centres.

127 The dark spots on the moon—the "man in the moon" of popular English speech—were in the Middle Age legends of Italy the image of Cain holding a burning bush and condemned, as in *Gen*, iv 22, to perpetual wandering. The legend is noticed also in *Par* ii 51, *Conv* ii 14. The setting of the moon beyond Seville (see notes, as in C xi 113-115, the display of astronomical accuracy) indicates the hour before sunrise on the second day of the pilgrim's journey, reckoning from the full moon.

## CANTO XXI.

*The Fifth Bolgia—The Peculators—The Ancient of Santa Zita—  
The Pranks of the Demons.*

So on from bridge to bridge, discussing theme  
Of which my Comedy cares not to tell,  
We went ; and when we gained the point extreme,  
There did we pause to view another dell  
Of Malebolge, and more wallings vain, 5  
And saw a wondrous darkness o'er it dwell  
As when Venetian ships in dock remain,  
The clammy pitch boils up in winter-tide  
To fit their unsound hulls for sea again ,  
They cannot put to sea, so there abide ; 10  
One mends the timber, and one caulks anew  
The ribs of ship that many a sea has tried,  
There one the stem and one the stern drives through,  
Some fashion oars and some the cordage twine,  
The mainsail or the mizen some renew , 15  
So, not by fire, but by a skill divine,  
Thick viscid pitch seethes ever there below,  
Which as with birdlime all the bank did line  
I looked on it, but no more saw I so  
Than bubbles which the boiling drove on high ; 20  
First swelling out, and then collapsing low.  
While I, with downward gazing, turned mine eye,  
My Guide, crying out to me, " Beware ! beware !"  
Drew me to him from where I stood hard by ;

<sup>1</sup> We enter on the fifth Bolgia of the eighth circle, and find ourselves among the givers and takers of bribes. Ruskin (*R. C.* xviii 11) sees in the boiling pitch the symbol of the money in which corruption finds its motive and its home, clinging to, and defiling, everything.

<sup>2</sup> The old arsenal of Venice (the word is traced to the Arabic *darsanaak* = house of industry; *Dict. Etym. Wörterb.* 3d ed vol I p 34), constructed in 1104, fortified with walls and towers, was one of the most famous in Europe in the 13th century. There were constructed the galleys which were the strength of the Venetian navy. The picture is obviously drawn from life, probably at the time of Dante's visit to Venice in 1314. We have seen in C. xix 80 that this portion of the *Inferno* was at least revised after that date. May we think of Marco Polo as taking the poet to see what was to him the most interesting scene in Venice? Comp. note on C. xvii 17.

And then I turne], as one who longs to dare 35  
 To gaze on what behoveth him to flee,  
 Yet stands unmanned by terror unaware,  
 Who slacketh not his flight through wish to see,  
 And then behind I saw a demon black  
 Come running on the crag full speedily. 39  
 Ah me! how eager was he to attack!  
 How bitter seemed he to me in his deed!  
 With open wings, and on his feet not slack.  
 His shoulders, high and curved, were sharp indeed,  
 And bore a sinner with his legs astride, 35  
 And grasping both his feet did he proceed,  
 "Ho, Malebranche, of our bridge," he cried,  
 "Lo! here of Santa Zita's Ancients one,  
 Plunge him down there till I once more have hied  
 Back to that land, which with them is o'errun. 40  
 All, save Bonturo, are corrupters there,  
 And No is turned to Yes by *bass* pence won"  
 He flung him down, and on the hard rock bare  
 He turned, and never mastiff unleashed sped  
 With *steps* so swift the hunted thief to tear 45

<sup>35</sup> We enter on the most grotesque of all the scenes of the *Inferno* the pantomime as it were of Hell. That grotesqueness was, it need not be said (see note on C v 4), essentially mediæval and was probably reproduced from some of the dramatic mysteries which were then common throughout Europe, and of which the memorable performance on the Ponte Carrara at Florence in 1304 was a conspicuous instance. I have thought it best to keep the Italian names of the demon actors, and will content myself with indicating their meaning: Malebranche = Evil claws, Malacoda = Evil tail, Scarmiglione = lacerator, Alichino = Wing drooper, Calabrina = I ramble now (snow or hoar frost, probably in irony for the boiling pitch), Barbariccia = Ugly beard, Cagnazzo = Dog face, Iribicocco = Devil moor, Draghinazzo = Dragon face, Ciaratto = Swine face, Graffiaccane = Grappler, Farfarello = Brawler, Rubicante = Ruddy face. These are the *dramatis personæ* of the strange burlesque drama that follows.

<sup>39</sup> The 'ancients' (*anziani*) were at Lucca what the Priori were at Florence an elective magistracy representing the five 'regions' of the city. The offender, not named, was probably sufficiently indicated by this description. Santa Zita (d. 1278) was the heroine saint whom Lucca had chosen as its patron. A story which makes her, as it were the Pamela of the 13th century (Zita = maid servant) had led to her being venerated as a saint prior to her formal canonisation (*Amf* pp. 243-250). The tomb of the saint is in the Church of St. Frediano. On the *festa* of the saint her mimicry is exposed, and her shrine visited by every maid servant in Lucca, each offering a nosegay (*Harc* II 499).

<sup>41</sup> No contemporary records speak of Bonturo Dati as corrupt in office, and the statements of early commentators are too apt to be simply built upon their text. What is known of him is that he took a prominent part in a quarrel between Lucca and Pisa in 1314, and that he was therefore living when Dante wrote. The grim irony of the exception reminds one of Porson's epigram—"All except Hermann and he too a German." Dante, it may be noted, had sojourned in Lucca in 1314 for some months. The incisive condemnation of corruption (*baratteria*) was perhaps emphasised by the fact that this was the very charge on which Dante himself had been wrongfully condemned.

The other sank, then rose with downward head,  
 And then the demons whom the bridge did hude  
 Cried, "Here no Holy Face is worshippèd;  
 Far other swimming this than Serchio's tide;  
 Therefore, unless thou seek'st our hooks to taste, 50  
 Take heed thou rise not from the pitch outside"  
 Then him with more than hundred hooks they chased,  
 And said, "Here covered thou thy dance must take,  
 And, if thou canst, for secret pilfering haste."  
 Not otherwise do cooks their scullions make 55  
 Thrust flesh half down the caldron with their prong,  
 Lest it should through the seething surface break  
 "That thou appear not here," my Master's tongue  
 Spako to me, "crouch thou here behind a rock,  
 That so its shadow o'er thee may be flung; 60  
 And let no outrage offered to me shock  
 Or cause thee fear, all these things have I known  
 Long time ago I met this scuffling flock"  
 Then passed he from the bridge's topmost stone,  
 And as towards the sixth bank he drew near, 65  
 'Twas meet his face should be as tranquil shown  
 Then with the furious rage and madness sheer,  
 With which upon a beggar dogs rush on,  
 Who on a sudden halts and asks alms there,  
 So from beneath the bridge they rushed each one 70  
 And turned against him every grappling hook.  
 But he cried out, "Let ill-intent be none!  
 Before ye seize me with your torturing crook,  
 Let one among you forward come and hear,  
 Then let him, ere he seize, for counsel look." 75  
 "Let Malacoda," they all cried, "appear"  
 Then one came forward while the rest stood by,  
 And as he came he said, "What good is here?"

<sup>48</sup> The "holy face" was the head of the Christ on a wooden crucifix, said to have been the work of angel hands, who finished what had been begun by Nicodemus. It was the great relic of Lucca. Men swore by it (it was the favourite oath of William Rufus) and cried to it for help, and the point of the taunt is that that cry is profitless in Hell. The crucifix, a work of early Byzantine art, is still to be seen in the Duomo of Lucca (*Amp* 1 c, *Have* 11 495). The Serchio, a river outside the walls of Lucca, was the common bathing-place of its citizens.

<sup>55-120</sup> It does not seem expedient to annotate the details of the wild drama that follows. Briefly, the demons, as before, try to resist the progress of the pilgrims. Virgil interposes to warn them (as he had warned Charon, C. iii. 95) that it is useless to resist the will of Heaven,



"What, Malacoda ! thinkest thou that I  
     Thus far have ventured," then my Master said, 80  
     "Till now secure from all the tricks you try,  
 Without God's will, and fate propitious made ?  
     Let me pass on ; another, so wills Heaven,  
     By me must through this wildered way be led."  
 Then to his haughty mood a shock was given, 85  
     So that his hook he let fall at his feet,  
     Then to the rest, "Now let him not be driven."  
 And then my Guide : "O thou who hast thy seat,  
     Squat, squat among the crags that bridge the pit,  
     Now may'st thou safely stir these me to meet." 90  
 And then I rose and quick to him did flit.  
     So fiercely then the devils rushed on me,  
     I feared they would some breach of faith commit.  
 Thus full of fear I once those troops did see  
     Who from Caprona issued, treaty-bound, 95  
     When all around they saw the enemy.  
 I to the spot then turned myself full round,  
     Where stood my Guide, nor did I lift mine eye  
     From off their face, which far from kind I found.  
 They lowered their hooks, and "Will ye that I try 100  
     To grab his hip !" one to the others cried  
     "Yes, see thou nick him well," they made reply.  
 And then that demon who with my good Guide  
     Discourse had held, all suddenly turned round  
     And said, "Peace, peace, Scarmighon, quiet bide," 105  
 Then spake to us, "No further path is found  
     Here on this rock, for there the sixth arch lies,  
     All crushed and shattered in the depth profound  
 But if to advance be pleasing in your eyes,  
     Upon this bank of stone pursue your way ; 110  
     Another rock is near which path supplies.

and Dante, who had hid himself in terror, comes forth reassured, and the chief of the demons sends the travellers with an escort. The fiend pictures of the elder Teniers (*Visions of St Antony* and the like) give one some notion of what was before the poet's inward eye.

<sup>84</sup> A distinctly personal reminiscence. Caprona was a fortress of the Pisans taken by the troops of Florence and Lucca in 1289. In the expedition Dante, then twenty-four, took part. The holders of the fortress had capitulated on terms which secured their lives, but the poet recalled their frightened looks when they came out of the gates and saw themselves in the middle of their foes (*Buffi in Scart.*) Such, he says, was his look as he came out of his hiding-place.

Five hours beyond this same hour yesterday,  
 Twelve hundred threescore years and six complete  
 Did make, since here the path in ruins lay.  
 I send in that direction comrades meet 115  
 To see if any doth himself upraise ;  
 Go on with them ; they will not you maltreat.  
 Come, Alichino, Calcabrina," says  
 He then to them, "and thou Cagnazzo too,  
 Let Barbariccia show the ten their waye ; 120  
 Come, Draghinazzo, Libicocc', to view,  
 Ciriatto with his tusks, and Graffiacan,  
 Mad Rubicant and Farfarell, come you '  
 Upon the boiling pitch look well and scan ,  
 Let these in safety to the next crag go, 125  
 Which all unbroken doth the deep dens span "  
 "Ah me ! my Master," said I to him ; "lo !  
 What see I ? Let us gudeless go alone,  
 If thou know'st how ; none for myself, I trow,  
 I ask, if etill thy wonted skill is shown. 130  
 Dost thou not see them how their teeth they grind,  
 And with their eyebrows threaten us with woe."  
 And he to me "Be not of fearful mind ;  
 Let them go on and gnash their teeth at will ,  
 Their victims they among those boiled ones find " 135  
 On the left dike they wheeled, but not until  
 Each had thrust out his tongue between his teeth,  
 And to their leader made their signal ill,  
 While trumpet notes from his back parts did breathe

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### CANTO XXII.

*The Fifth Bolgia—Ciampolo—Friar Gervais—Michael Zanche*

I HAVE seen knights break up their camp for war,  
 Begin the attack, and march in full array,  
 And sometimes seek a safe retreat afar ;

<sup>115</sup> Another reference (see C. IV. 35, XII. 36) to the descent into Hades, the "harrowing of Hell" of our early English writers, assumed to coincide with March 25 or 26 A.D. 34. We need scarcely embarrass ourselves with the precise hour of the Crucifixion and the death which they imply. What may be noted is, as in C. XX. 126, that the pilgrims have reached the morning of the Saturday before Easter in A.D. 1300.

I've seen the vanguard o'er your fair fields stray,  
     Ye Aretines; yea, seen the squadrons wheel, 5  
     And now in jousts and now in tourneys play,  
 Now with bell's chime and now with trumpet's peal,  
     With drums and beacons on the castle wall,  
     Our use, or that of alien commonweal,  
 But never at so strange a bagpipe call 10  
     Saw I or horsemen move or infantry,  
     Or, at earth's signs or star's, a good ship tall.  
 With those ten demons we our course did ply,  
     Fierce company were they, but "in the church  
     With saints, with gluttons to the hostelry." 15  
 Thon to the pitch did I direct my search,  
     The fashion of that Bolgia dark to see,  
     And of the crew whom that fierce fire did scorch.  
 As dolphins, when they signal give at sea  
     To sailors, with their backs all arched amain, 20  
     So that they plan how best the storm to flee,  
 So then, to seek some respite from his pain,  
     One of those sinners did his back upraise,  
     And quick as lightning hid himself again.  
 And as along a ditch's watery ways 25  
     Are seen the frogs with muzzles all thrust out,  
     So that their feet and bulk are hid from gaze;  
 So stood the sinners everywhere about  
     But soon as Barbariccia near them drew,  
     Beneath the boiling pitch they fled in rout. 30

<sup>6</sup> The reference to Caprona had apparently awakened other personal reminiscences of the days when Dante, then in the flower of his early manhood, had fought in the ranks of the Florentines. The battle referred to is probably that of Campaldino (1288), at the outset of which the cavalry of the Aretines were victorious. Eventually the Florentines under Vieri de' Cerchi rallied, and remained masters of the field (*Dino*, c. 1, *Vill* vii 124, 131, *Faur* i 152). It adds to the interest of the reference to remember (1) that Dante's friend Guido Cavalcanti and Bernardino da Polenta, brother of Francesca, had been with him in the battle, (2) that Buonconte di Montefeltro had been slain in it (*Purg* v 83), (3) that a letter of Dante's is extant in which he speaks of his "fear" at the beginning of the battle, and his "joy" in the victory (*Weg* 86-88).

<sup>7</sup> The "alien" usages refer probably to the German and French customs which under the influence respectively of Frederick II and Charles of Anjou, had mingled with the traditional tactics and equipments of the native Italian armies. The starting point and goal of the description are somewhat shocking to our modern refinement, but mediæval humour, as *e.g.* in Chaucer, could be Rabelaisian and Aristophanic (*Nub* 164-166) in its unshrinking breadth. The proverb of l. 24, the Italian equivalent of like proverbs in well nigh all languages ("When at Rome, do as Rome does," &c.), reads almost like an *apologia* for the absence of all the conventional dignity of poetry.

<sup>18</sup> The comparison implies voyages in the Mediterranean Sea, or probably from Calais to Dover. Comp. C. xv 4.

I saw, and still the horror thrills me through,  
 One waiting so, as sometimes it doth chance  
 One frog remains while others dive from view,  
 And Graffiacan, who nearest did advance,  
 Seized him by locks all pitch-besmeared behind, 25  
 And dragged him, otter-like, before my glance.  
 Well did I know the names to each assigned,  
 So at the time when they were chosen, I  
 Did note, and as they called them, bore in mind.  
 "Ho, Rubicante, see that thou apply 40  
 Thy talons sharp behind, his back to flay,"  
 Then all those cursèd ones aloud did cry  
 And I. "My Master, bid them, if thou may,  
 To let thee know that wretch unfortunate,  
 Thus fallen 'neath his adversaries' sway" 45  
 My Leader then drew near him where he sat,  
 And asked him who he was, and he replied,  
 "My birth was in Navarra's kingly state,  
 To serve a lord I left my mother's side,  
 For she had borne me to a rascal vile, 50  
 Who flung himself and his estate aside.  
 Then served I in good Thibault's court awhile,  
 There to deceit's foul sin did I descend,  
 And in this hot pitch pay for that my guile."  
 And Ciriatto, whose huge mouth did end 55  
 On either side, in tusks like those of swine,  
 Soon made him feel how they could fiercely rend  
 "Among wild cats the mouse came," runs the line,  
 But Barbariccia while he him embraced,  
 Said "Lack, till with my fork I him entwine." 60  
 Then thus, as turning, he my Master faced,  
 "Ask him," he said, "if more thou seek'st to know,  
 Ere yet his form by others be defaced."

<sup>36</sup> The grotesque element becomes less and less restrained, and I will not follow it in its details. This may be noted, however, that even in our own time, and in the work of a master-poet, Cardinal Newman's *Dream of Gerontius*, this element of grotesqueness appears in a form so strikingly parallel, in all but coarseness, with Dante's as to suggest the idea of deliberate reproduction, though in this case it has, of course, no foundation.

<sup>46</sup> The earlier commentators give the name of the victim as Ciampolo, but content themselves with stating in prose what they found in Dante's verse, and add nothing to our knowledge. Dante himself names Thibault I of Navarre as a poet (*V. E.* 19, 11, 5, 6), but that

My Guide : "Of that vile crew I pray thee show  
 If thou dost know of any Latian there, 66  
 Beneath the pitch." And he : "Yea, there below  
 I left but now one born that region near ;  
 Would I were with him, covered by the tar !  
 For then nor claw nor grapnel would I fear"  
 And Libicocco, "We have borne too far," 70  
 Spake, and then seized his arms with curvèd crook,  
 And gave a wrench that did his tendons mar ;  
 And Draghinazzo sought to seize with hook  
 His legs ; but then their chief, Decurion,  
 Turned himself round and round with angry look 75  
 And when they were to peace a little won,  
 Of him, who still was gazing at his wound,  
 My Guide without delay made question :  
 "Who then was he, whom leaving, thou hast found  
 Such ill success in coming to the shore ?" 80  
 And he made answer, "Of Gallura's ground,  
 The friar Gomita, filled with fraud's base lore,  
 For he his lord's foes had beneath his hand,  
 Yet acted so that each exults the more.  
 Money he took, and easy judgment planned 85  
 (So speaks he), and in other functions too  
 Sovereign, not subject, in corruption's band.  
 And Signor Michael Zanche joins his crew,  
 Of Logodoro : no fatigue can bind  
 Their talk of all they in Sardinia knew. 90

14 all. He died in 1270, on his return from Tunis with the bones of St. Louis. The history would seem to have been the common one of a man rising to high estate and falling into all the arts of corruption.

67 This, as I. St. shows, was the Friar Gomita of Gallura, a Sardinian, and therefore "near," though not of, Italy. Sardinia was at this time subject to Pisa, and the district of Gallura was under the government of Nino dei Visconti, grandson of Ugolino, who in his turn intrusted everything to Gomita. Charges of corruption were brought against him, and Nino, after at first disregarding them as slanders, afterwards ascertained them to be true, and condemned the friar to be hanged. Nino is named with honour as "gentle" in *Purg.* viii. 53. Comp. Note in *A. v. v.* p. 113, C. xxxiii. 13.

74 Decurion, the captain of the ten demons.

88 Michael Zanche was governor of Logodoro, another district of Sardinia. The title of "Don" (*Donno* in the Italian) was the Sardinian equivalent of "signor." He was seneschal to Eazo, king of Sardinia, a natural son of Frederick II. (*Kington*, ii. 80), through his marriage with Adelasia, the heiress of that island, and after his death in prison at Bologna in 1271, married his widow Adelasia, and became lord of Logodoro. He was assassinated in 1275 by Branca d'Orta of Genoa (comp. C. xxxiii. 137). The two criminals are represented as talking over their ill deeds.

Ah ! see how that one there his teeth doth grind !  
I would say more, but fear that demon fell  
To flay my hide should be too well inclined."  
And then their Provost turned to Farfarell,  
Whose eyes as if he meant to strike did glare, 95  
And said, "Stand off, thou spiteful bird of Hell !"  
"If more ye seek or to behold or hear,"  
Then spoke once more the poor wretch terrified,  
"Tuscans or Lombards, I will bring them near ;  
But let those fierce-clawed demons stand aside, 100  
So that these may not fear their vengeance stern ;  
And I, while I upon this spot abide,  
Although but one, will make seven hither turn,  
When I shall whistle, as we're wont to do  
When we a time to issue forth discern." 105  
At this Cagnazzo raised his jowl to view,  
Wagging his head, and said, "His cunning hear,  
Which he has planned to plunge away from you !"  
And he, who had of tricks full plenteous share,  
Answered, "In sooth, too cunning far am I, 110  
When to my friends a greater ill I bear."  
And Alchin gave way, against the cry  
Of all the rest, and said, "If thou dost leap,  
Not at full gallop will I on thee fly,  
But o'er the pitch my wings in motion keep. 115  
Leave we the heights and let the bank be screen,  
To see if thou the victory shalt reap."  
Now, Reader, hear how frolic new was seen.  
Each turned his eyes towards the other side ;  
He first who most unwilling erst had been. 120  
He of Navarre chose well the fitting tide,  
Set his feet firm on earth, and in a trice  
Plunged, and so left their wish ungratified.  
Then in each fiend did sense of guilt arise,  
In him most who was cause of that defeat , 125  
Wherefore he moves, and "Now thou'rt taken " cries.  
But little gained he ; wings were not so fleet  
As fear ; and one his downward course did take,  
And one his wings in upward flight did beat.

Not otherwise than this the duck doth make 130  
 Her sudden plunge when nears the falcon's flight,  
 And he flies up, much vexed, with wings that ache.  
 Then Calcabrina, mocked and full of spite,  
 Went flying on behind him, not displeased  
 By that escape to have a ground for fight 135  
 And when the great corrupter's presence ceased,  
 He turned his claws his comrade fiend to hold,  
 And o'er the moat upon his carcase seized ;  
 But he too was a falcon keen and bold,  
 And grappled with him, and together they 140  
 Fell, and within the seething pool both rolled  
 The burning heat disparted them straightway,  
 But all their power to raise themselves was gone,  
 Such thick cement upon their pinions lay.  
 Then Barbariccia and his troop made moan, 145  
 And bade four hasten from the farther coast  
 With all their prongs, and nimbly they sped on,  
 Thus side and that they went down to their post.  
 They thrust their hooks towards the birdlimed pair,  
 Whom that hot scurf-crust did already roast, 150  
 And so we left them both entangled there.

### CANTO XXIII.

*The Sixth Bolgia—Depasture of the Demons—The Hypocrites—  
 The Friars Joyous—Cuiaphas.*

SILENT, alone, with no companion near,  
 We journeyed, one before and one behind,  
 (So Minor Friars when they walk appear) ;  
 And Æsop's fable came into my mind,  
 As my thoughts brooded o'er that recent brawl,  
 That, where the tale of frog and mouse we find ,

131-139 Another image from falconry Comp C xvii. 127

<sup>2</sup> The picture of the Minor Friars was one which might have been seen in any town in Italy, but, looking to the facts stated in note on C. xvi. 106, we can scarcely help connecting it with the fact that Dante himself had probably taken part in such processions as a tertiary of the Order of St Francis

<sup>3</sup> The fable is not found in those commonly ascribed to Æsop, but appears in the life of

Not more alike do *mo* and *issa* fall  
 Than one was to the other, if the end  
 And the beginning we to mind recall.  
 And as one thought to others birth doth lend, 10  
 So out of that another straightway rose,  
 Which made me 'neath a doubled terror bend.  
 So thought I. "These, out-tricked and mocked by foes,  
 We being the cause, with loss of such a kind,  
 I needs must think 'twill them to ill dispose. 15  
 If anger with their malice be combined,  
 They will pursue us, fiercer far than hound  
 Pursues the hare he snaps at from behind."  
 Already every hair on end I found  
 With fear, and, full of care, I stood aside, 20  
 Then spake. "O Master, if no hiding-ground  
 Be shown for me and thee, I'm terrified  
 At these same evil-clawed ones There behind  
 They come, in thought I hear them at our side."  
 "Were I a mirror, glass with lead combined," 25  
 He said, "not sooner thee I'd image there  
 Than now thy soul's clear likeness here I find.  
 It was but now thy thoughts to mine came near,  
 As with like gesture and like presence seen,  
 So that the twain did common counsel bear. 30  
 If it so chance the right bank down doth lean,  
 That to another Bolgia we descend,  
 Then shall we 'scape that fancied chase, I ween."  
 Nor had he brought his counsel to an end,  
 When I beheld them with their wings outspread, 35  
 Not far, and with intent to seize us, bend.

that writer by Maximus Planudes, a monk of Constantinople, in the 14th century (*d* after 1340), and is now commonly included in the appendix to *Phaedrus* as Fable vi. It runs thus: "A mouse invited a frog to supper in a rich man's larder. After the feast the frog gave a return invitation, and as the mouse couldn't swim, proposed to take him in tow, tied by a string, to his home in the water. The mouse, as he was drowning, foretold that an avenger would appear before long. An eagle seeing the body floating on the water, swooped down and devoured them both." The fable had probably found its way into a Latin reading book of the 13th century.

<sup>1</sup> *Mo*, as in C x 21, xxiii 28, *et al.*, was old Italian for *adesso*, of which *issa*, still used in Lombardy and near Chur, is another form.

<sup>25</sup> This was, it need hardly be said, the ordinary construction of mediæval mirrors. A like comparison occurs in *Conv* iii. 9. The thought is that of "face answering to face," as in *Prov* xxvii. 19. *Comp. Par* ii 89.



Then suddenly my Guide his arms did fling  
 Around me, as a mother, roused by cries,  
 Sees the fierce flames around her gathering,  
 And takes her boy, nor ever halts, but flies, 40  
 Caring for him than for herself far more,  
 Though one scant shift her only robe supplies.  
 Then he, from that high marge of stony shore,  
 Gave himself headlong to the pendent rock  
 Which one side of the Bolgia lappeth o'er. 45  
 Never ran stream with such a rushing shock  
 Adown the sluice to turn a water-mill,  
 When it comes close upon the mill wheel's dock,  
 As did my Master down that sloping hill,  
 Still bearing up my form upon his breast, 50  
 As though not friend, but son, his arms did fill.  
 Scarce had his foot the very bottom pressed  
 Of that deep pit, when they the summit gained  
 Above us, but his fear was laid to rest,  
 For the high Providence that these ordained 55  
 At the fifth fosse to keep their post as guard,  
 There, without power to leave it them detained  
 A painted people there met our regard,  
 Who round and round still moved with tardy pace,  
 Weeping, with features worn and spent and marred, 60  
 Cloaks had they, with hoods low o'er eyes and face  
 Down hanging, made in fashion like to those  
 Which at Cologne are worn by monkish race,  
 O'erlaid without with gold, that dazzling shows,  
 Within all lead, and of such crushing weight, 65  
 That those had seemed of straw that Frederick chose

<sup>38</sup> Vivid as the picture is, and obviously drawn from life, it is still more striking in the symbolism which underlies it. In Virgil, as the type of the higher human wisdom, Dante had found more than guidance, more than illumination—an absolutely maternal tenderness.

<sup>39</sup> The demons had their work confined to the fifth Bolgia. The pilgrims now pass to the sixth, where they find themselves among the hypocrites.

<sup>40</sup> In spite of the *l' di Clugna*, or of a conjectural identification with a Cologne in the Veronese territory, there is little doubt that the more famous Cologne is meant, and if so, we have another trace of the extent of Dante's travels. It is obvious that he may have travelled by the Rhine on his way to or from Bruges (C. xv. 4). The story of the hoods was not without a touch of humour likely to attract a mind like Dante's. The monks of an abbey in Cologne, it was said, wanted a fuller recognition of their dignity, and applied to the Pope to wear scarlet hoods trimmed with fur, after the manner of the doctors of the universities. He taught them a lesson of humility by ordering them to wear hoods of a dark grey serge, so long that they trailed behind them as they walked.

<sup>41</sup> The story ran that Frederick II. had punished traitors *e.g.*, Count Regnier di Manente, by putting hoods of lead over their heads and then exposing them to the heat of a furnace, which caused the lead to melt (*Kington*, i. 475).

O everlasting weary robe of state !  
 We turned ourselves toward the left again  
 With them, intent on their wail desolate,  
 But through the weight, that folk, outworn with pain, 70  
 So slowly moved, that we new comrades still  
 Found, as each forward step by us was ta'en.  
 Then said I to my Guide, "Find, if thou wilt,  
 Some one by name or action to us known,  
 And as thou go'st, let thine eyes gaze their fill." 75  
 And one who heard my speech of Tuscan tone,  
 Cried to us from behind, "Stay ye your feet,  
 Ye who through this dusk air are running on ;  
 What thou dost seek, from me perchance thou'lt greet."  
 And then my Leader turned and bade me "Wait, 80  
 And then thy footsteps to his motion mete "  
 I stood, and saw two forms in hurry great  
 Of purpose and of look to come to me,  
 But their strait path and burden made them late  
 When they came near, with side-glance steadfastly 85  
 They looked at me, but not a word they spake ;  
 Then whispered to each other secretly,  
 "His throat gives proof he living breath doth take ;  
 And if they're dead, by what especial grace  
 Do they their journey with no hood's weight make ?" 90  
 Then said to me . "O thou of Tuscan race,  
 Who to the guild of hypocrites art come,  
 To tell us who thou art count no disgrace "  
 And I "I had my birth and found my home 95  
 In the great city hard by Arno fair,  
 And in my own true body here I roam ;  
 But who are ye, on whose wan cheeks despair,  
 E'en as I see, in many a tear doth flow,  
 And what this torment that on you doth glare ?"  
 And one replied, "These orange hoods do so 100  
 Crush with their leaden burden, that the weight  
 Doth make the scale to creak and groan below ,

<sup>88</sup> The shadow forms of the dead exist without breathing, and they note in the movement of Dante's throat that he is not one of them.

Friars Joyous were we, of Bologna late ;  
 His name Lodringo, Catalano mine,  
 And both together chosen by thy state, 105  
 As oft to one man men the task assign,  
 To keep its peace, and how we worked our will  
 Thou may'st around Gardingo's walls divine."  
 And I began : " O friars, your deeds ill . . ."  
 But more I said not, for before mine eye 110  
 One on the ground, by three stakes pierced, lay still,  
 Who, when he saw me, writhed in agony,  
 And, sobbing, breathed his sighs through shaggy beard  
 And when Fra Catalan did this espy,  
 He said, " This man, whom thou dost see thus appeared, 115  
 Gave counsel to the Pharisees 'twas meet  
 By one man's death the nation's guilt were cleared  
 Impaled and naked lies he in our street,  
 As thou perceivest, and he needs must know  
 The weight of whoso passeth by his feet. 120  
 And his wife's father suffereth equal woe  
 Here in this fosse, and all that Sanhedrim,  
 Seed whence great evils to the Jews did grow "  
 Then saw I Virgil wondering much at him  
 Who there was lying stretched upon the cross, 125  
 In everlasting exile drear and grim  
 Then to the friar he thus his words did toss :  
 " Think it not hard to tell us, if thou may,  
 If on the right is any path across,  
 By which we twain might outward take our way, 130  
 Without constraining any black fiends drear  
 To take and bear us from this pit away ?"

<sup>105</sup> The Friars Joyous were, strictly speaking, brothers of the Military Order of the Knights of St. Mary, some priests, some laymen, married or unmarried, instituted by Urban IV (*d.* 1264) at Bologna to fight the Saracens. Like the Templars, they acquired the reputation of leading easy and luxurious lives, and hence their popular sobriquet (= Frères Bons-Vivants). The two here named, as respectively representing Guelph and Ghibelline tendencies, were invited in 1266 by the Ghibellines of Florence to do conjointly what was commonly done by a single Podestà, and restore order between the contending factions. As it was, they were just so far impartial as to take bribes from both sides (*Vill* vii 11, *Malisp* c. 190), betraying each in turn. Guido of Arezzo (*Purg* xxiv 56), the poet, was said to have joined the Order. Comp *Faur* 1 346.

<sup>106</sup> Gardingo, a district of Florence near the Palazzo Vecchio, is named as containing the houses of the Uberti which had been destroyed by order of the two Podestàs.

<sup>115</sup> Comp *John* xviii. 14. The punishment described in l. 120 seems to reproduce the thought of *Isaiah* li 23. Caiaphas differs from the other hypocrites in being naked, with no

Then answered he, "Beyond thy hopes is near  
 A rock from yon great circle, that awry  
 Is stretched, and spans each cruel valley here, 135  
 Save that o'er this it comes not, but doth lie  
 All broken, on its ruins thou may'st go,  
 For down it slopes, and at the base mounts high "  
 A little while my Guide stood, head bent low,  
 Then said, "Full ill did he the matter tell 140  
 Who with his hook drags sinners to their woe "  
 And then the friar "I at Bologna well  
 Recall the vices to the Devil laid,  
 'A liar, of all lies the parent fell.'"  
 Soon did my Guide pass on with hastened tread, 145  
 His face disturbed a little by his wrath ;  
 Then, from those crushed ones parting, as he led,  
 I followed where those dear feet traced their path.

### CANTO XXIV.

*The Clamber up the Rock—The Seventh Bolgia—The Robber Vanni Fucci.*

IN that first season of the youthful year,  
 When the sun's locks the chill Aquarius slakes,  
 And now the nights to half the day draw near,  
 When on the ground the hoar-frost semblance makes  
 Of the fair image of her sister white, 5  
 But soon her brush its colour true forsakes,  
 The peasant churl, whose store is emptied quite,  
 Rises and looks around, and sees the plains  
 All whitened, and for grief his hip doth smite,

hoods such as they wore, and in being crucified, suffering eternally the doom to which he had consigned the Just One. Virgil's wonder (l. 124) may be thought of as springing from the fact that Caiaphas had not been there when he last made his descent into Hell (C. ix. 22).

134 The great circle is the outer rim of the pit of the Malebolge. The bridge of rock which spanned the other pits was here broken down, the crash being thought of as one of the effects of the earthquake of *Matt. xxvii.*, so that the pilgrims had to clamber up the broken masses of rock. Line 140 refers to the assurance given by Malacoda (C. xxi. 111) that they would find a pathway.

143 Catalano speaks as one who had studied theology at Bologna and remembered the words of *John viii. 44.*

5 The phrase "hoar frost, the sister of snow," will remind the reader of "dust, the sister of mud," in *Æsch. Agam.* 495. The comparison is among the longest and most vivid of any in the poem, and is a typical example of the union of the power that observes the phenomena of external nature with insight into human feelings as affected by them.

Turns to his house, and up and down complains, 10  
     Like the poor wretch who knows not what to do ;  
     Then back he turns, and all his hope regains,  
 Seeing the world present an altered hue,  
     In little time, and takes his shepherd's crook,  
     And drives his lambs to roam through pastures new ; 15  
 So when I saw my Master's troubled look,  
     It made me also grieved and sick at heart,  
     And for that ill a plaster soon I took.  
 For when we reached the bridge's broken part,  
     My Guide's glance turned to me with sweetness fraught, 20  
     As when from that hill's foot I first did start.  
 His arms he stretched when he awhile had thought  
     In counsel with himself, and well had scanned  
     The crag, and both to meet around me brought,  
 And like to him who works with thought and hand, 25  
     (For forward still his glance is ever thrown),  
     So lifting me to where I did command  
 A great rock's peak, he marked another stone,  
     Saying, "Next on that one there lay thou thy hold,  
     But let its strength to bear thee first be shown." 30  
 No way was that for one in hood enrolled,  
     For he so light, and I, by him upborne,  
     Could scarcely scramble up from fold to fold.  
 And were it not that on that margin's bourne  
     The way was shorter far than elsewhere, 35  
     (Of him I know not), I had been outworn ;  
 But because Malebolge still doth bear  
     Downward, and to the deepest pit descend,  
     Such is the structure of each valley there  
 That this side upward, that doth downward bend. 40  
     We came, however, to that point at last,  
     Whence the last stone, thrust forward, doth impend.  
 So spent my breath was with that climbing fast,  
     When I was up I could no farther go,  
     And so sat down, that weary toil being past. 45

21-45 The description, like its parallels in C. XII. 1-10, implies a certain want of muscularity. The poet's memories of rock-climbing were not those of a member of the Alpine Club. Such experiences seemed to him to belong rather to the scenery of the Inferno than to that of the

"Now is it meet thou be no longer slow,"  
 My Master said, "for not on couch of down  
 Come men to fame, nor coverlet below,  
 And whose spends his life without renown  
 Leaves of himself upon the earth such trace 50  
 As smoke in air, or foam on water blown.  
 Therefore bestir thyself, thy trouble face  
 With that brave soul that wins in every fight,  
 Unless it share thy heavier body's case.  
 Thou yet must climb a longer stairway's flight; 55  
 'Tis not enough to have left that crew behind;  
 If thou dost hear me, act thereon aright."  
 Then did I rise in somewhat better wind  
 Than I had thought to feel myself before,  
 And said, "On then; new strength within I find!" 60  
 Then on the path of rock we onward bore,  
 Which we found rough, and difficult, and strait,  
 And steeper far than that we had passed o'er.  
 Talking I went, to hide my feeble state;  
 Then from the next moat lo! a voice was heard, 65  
 Speaking in accents scarce articulate,  
 Of all it said I caught no single word,  
 Though on the summit of the arch I stood,  
 But he who spake appeared to anger stirred.  
 I stooped, no eyes, with fullest life imbued, 70  
 Could pierce the abysmal depth of that obscure;  
 Then said I, "Master, may it please thy mood  
 To reach the next round and descent ensure,  
 For as I hear and nothing understand,  
 So when I look, my sight is dim and poor." 75

"serene" and enjoyable life of earth. The reminiscence of the "sweet look" in l. 20 suggests, however, the thought that we have a parable of a spiritual difficulty, help coming now as it had come at first (C 1 76).

<sup>48</sup> The words remind one of Milton's *Lycidas*. The two poets were alike in their burning desire for fame, and in their sense that those who seek it must "scorn delights and live laborious days." For l. 53, see the parallel of *Purg.* xvi. 75-78. The "longer stairway" of l. 55 is that of the Mount of Purgatory.

<sup>49</sup> One may perhaps see in this another personal reminiscence. Most Alpine travellers will remember how commonly the worst climber of the party is the one who will keep talking in order to show that he has strength for the work before him.

<sup>50</sup> The precise position of the travellers, as seen here and in l. 79, is that they have clambered up the rocks which led from the seventh Boigia, over which there was no bridge, to the bridge which spans the eighth. They descend, for the bridge slopes downward, but do not go down into that Boigia, contenting themselves with what they see in glancing down from the bridge.

"No other answer," said he, "thy demand  
 Shall have but action, for a good request  
 In silence should be met with act and hand."  
 Then from the bridge our downward course we pressed,  
 Where with the right bank it connects its way, 80  
 And then the pit to me was manifest.  
 And there I saw a terrible array  
 Of serpents, of such diverse form and mien,  
 That mere remembrance doth my blood's flow stay  
 No more let Libya's sands boast they have seen 85  
 Such; though they adders, vipers, dragons, bear,  
 With monstrous hydras and the amphibene,  
 Yet plagues so great and of such evil rare,  
 With Ethiopia joined, they never showed,  
 Nor all that by the Red Sea's waters are. 90  
 Among this fierce and miserable crowd  
 There ran a people naked, terrified,  
 No hope of cave or heliotrope allowed.  
 Behind their backs their hands with snakes were tied,  
 Their head and tail the reins they twisted o'er, 95  
 In front their tangled folds they multiplied;  
 And lo! at one who halted near our shore,  
 There came a serpent, and transfixed him thero,  
 Just where his neck and chin the shoulders bore  
 Nor O nor I so fast could one write here, 100  
 As he blazed up and burnt, and in his fall  
 Was turned perforce to ashes dry and sere.  
 And when to earth he fell and perished, all  
 The ashes of themselves together came,  
 And him forthwith did to himself recall, 105  
 So to great sages there is known the fame  
 That thus the Phoenix dies and lives again,  
 When he five hundred years of life can claim,

<sup>80</sup> One ventures to think that at this point the quick spontaneous imagination of the poet began for a while to flag. By way of compensation he falls back upon reminiscences of his two favourite poets, Lucan and Ovid and deliberately endeavours to surpass them in the strangeness and elaborateness of his description. His first picture is, as it were, a *replica* of Lucan's description of the Libyan desert (ix 706-723), in which he exhausts the whole vocabulary of serpent classification. In the "Red Sea" there is probably an allusion to the "fiery serpents" of *Numb.* xxi. 6.

<sup>84</sup> The "heliotrope" of the Middle Ages was not a flower, but a stone, the bloodstone of modern lapidaries, which was believed to act either as an amulet against venomous serpents or to make the wearer invulnerable.

<sup>100</sup> The description of the Phoenix seems reproduced from Ovid (*Met.* xv 398-408), the poet

Nor herbs nor any grass its life sustain,  
     But only tears of incense and of spice, 110  
     And nard and myrrh for winding-sheet remain.  
 As one who falls, nor knows by what device  
     The demon's force has dragged him to the ground,  
     Nor other seizure that a man's strength ties,  
 When he ariseth looketh all around, 115  
     All dazed and stunned with that great agony  
     Which he has borne, and heaves a sigh profound,  
 So rose that sinner then in misery.  
     Justice of God ! O how severe 'tis seen,  
     That rains such woes in vengeance from on high ! 120  
 My Guide then questioned him who he had been,  
     And he replied, "I from Toscana down  
     Fell but just now this cruel gorge within ;  
 A bestial life, not man's, my joy did crown,  
     Mule as I was. Lo ! Vanni Fucci I, 125  
     Fit den for beast like me Pistoia's known "  
 Then to my Guido I said, "Bid him not fly,  
     And ask what crime has thrust him here below ,  
     He, man of blood and wrath, once met mine eye "  
 Nor was the sinner, when he heard me, slow 130  
     To tell it, but on me fixed face and mind,  
     And was all painted as with shame and woe ,  
 Then spake, "It grieves me more that thou dost find  
     Me in this woe wherein thou see'st me he  
     Than when I left that other life behind. 135  
 What thou dost ask me I may not deny ,  
     Thus low I am cast down because I stole  
     The goodly treasure from the sacristy,

whom Dante was at this stage of his poem striving to outdo. His master, Brunetto, gives a like account, fixing the scene of the transformation at Helopolis (*Tris* v 26).

126 The story of Vanni Fucci (given in full by *Brown*) may be briefly told. He was the bastard son of Fuccio de' Lazari, one of the chief citizens of Pistoia, and, in company with other comrades in profligacy, plundered the Church of St. Jacopo in that city of its sacred vessels. Another citizen, Rampino, was suspected, but in order to save him, the criminal confessed his guilt and was hanged. He had been one of the Neri of Pistoia, and Dante, as one of the Bianchi of Florence, had apparently (l. 126) heard of other outrages. He is said, however, to have been among the poets of the time, and Crescimbeni has preserved a couplet in which he mourns, as in the tones of despair, at "having lost the good which once he might have had" (*Ist. Vulg. Poet.* ii 99). The bitterness with which Dante speaks here and elsewhere of Pistoia connects itself with the fact that he saw in it the birthplace of those hateful parties of the Blacks and Whites that had wrecked his own life and brought misery into his city.



And false blame fell upon another soul.  
 But that thou find not joy in such a sight, 140  
 If thou shalt ever leave this darksome hole,  
 Open thine ears and hear what I recite  
 Pistoia first doth thin the Neri out,  
 Then Florence changes men and manners quite ;  
 From Val di Magra Mars a blast draws out, 145  
 A vale which with dark clouds is overspread,  
 And with tempestuous storms and utter rout  
 Piceno's plain shall witness battle dread,  
 And he that cloud shall suddenly break through,  
 That each Bianco shall be smitten dead. 150  
 And thus I tell thy sorrow to renew."

### CANTO XXV.

*The Bolgia of the Serpents—Cianfa dei Donati and Others—The Man  
 and Serpent Transformation Scenes.*

His speech being ended, then that thief did raise  
 His hands with thumbs thrust out in scornful guise,  
 Crying, "Take this, God, Thine be this dispraise"

<sup>140</sup> Another prophecy after the event, analogous to those of Ciacco (C. vi. 54) and Farinata (C. x. 79), is put into Vanni's lips. The facts were, (1) that the Bianchi of Pistoia, helped by those of Florence, expelled the Neri in May 1301. (2) In November 1301, Charles of Valois' arrival made the Neri of Florence masters of the situation, so that Florence changed "men and manners," and the Bianchi were stamped out by Corso Donati and his party. Morcello of Malaspina, of the Val di Magra, at the head of the Pistoian Neri, attacks the Bianchi of that city in the Campo Piceno, and defeats them, and the Neri of Florence expel their Bianchi, Dante among them. The prophecy, as in l. 151, was meant to vex his soul with the fear of coming evil. No battle in Campo Piceno is mentioned by historians. Dante, however, was likely to know, especially as Morcello was afterwards, for a time, his friend and host, and to him the poet dedicated his *Purgatorio*. Scott refers the prophecy to the siege and capture of Serravalle in 1302 (*l. iii. viii. 52*), others to that of Pistoia (*Vill. viii. 82*).

<sup>1</sup> The special gesture, known technically as the "fig," was that of thrusting the thumb between the two fore-fingers. As with other like gestures, the thumb biting of *Romeo and Juliet* (l. 1), or the modern English of "taking a sight," it is scarcely worth while tracing its significance to its source. Each in its time has been the starting point of quarrels ending in bloodshed. The Italian "a fico" for this or that, as in *Merry Wives of Windsor*, l. 3, shows that it was still common in the 16th century. Curiously enough, Sacchetti (*Nov. 95*) tells a story of an ass-driver who made this gesture at Dante himself. The enemies of Florence showed their scorn by putting, on a tower at Carmignano, two arms of marble, making the *fig* at the city which they held up to opprobrium (*Vill. vi. 5*). The Florentines destroyed the tower in 1298. In the statutes of Prato this act was named, when done after Fucci's fashion, as a blasphemous outrage, punishable by fine or flogging.

Then looked I on the snakes with friendly eyes,  
 For one around his neck itself entwined, 8  
 As if it said, "No more of such replies."  
 Another came and both his arms did bind,  
 So tightly curling round in front, that he  
 No power to make a single turn could find.  
 Ah me! Pistoia, why not make decree 10  
 To burn thyself to dust and disappear,  
 Since thou in guilt excell'st thine ancestry?  
 In all Hell's many circles dark and drear,  
 No spirit saw I against God so proud,  
 Not he who fell from walls that Thebes did rear. 15  
 He fled, nor spake another word aloud.  
 And then I saw a Centaur with fierce din  
 Crying out, "What region doth this scorner shroud?"  
 Maremma's self doth no such treasure win,  
 I trow, of snakes as he had on his back, 20  
 As far as where man's visage doth begin.  
 Over his shoulders, at the neck-bone's rack,  
 A dragon lay, with fiery wings outspread,  
 And sets ablaze whoever him attack.  
 "There standeth Cacus," then my Master said, 25  
 "Who 'neath the rocky crag of Aventine  
 Made many a pool with blood that he had shed  
 Not with his brothers moves he in one line,  
 By reason of his subtle robbery,  
 When they were near him, of the herd of kine, 30  
 And so he ceased his tortuous trade to ply  
 Beneath the club of Hercules, and he  
 Of fivescore strokes scarce ten felt consciously"

<sup>11</sup> A *u' ingenerare* for *incenerare*, gives "why dost not thou refrain from begetting children?" The "ancestry" refers to the tradition, in which the Florentines exulted, that they had sprung from the noble stock of Rome, while Pistoia owed its origin to the disbanded troops of Catiline.

<sup>18</sup> See C. xiv 46 on Cipaneus. Vanni would have found himself among the blasphemers had he not been guilty of the baser crime of sacrilege.

<sup>17</sup> The Centaur, half man, half beast, is Cacus, whom Virgil (*Æn.* viii 193) represents as *semihomo*, and whom Dante transforms into a centaur. For Maremma, see note on C. xxix 47.

<sup>25</sup> We are still in the groove of the poet's classical reminiscences. For the story of Cacus, see *Æn.* viii 193-270. He appears here as the symbol of combined force and fraud.

And while he spake, far off did Cacus flee ;  
 And spirits, three in number, 'neath us came, 35  
 Whom neither I nor yet my Guide did see,  
 Till " Who are ye?" they loudly did exclaim.  
 And so my Leader ceased his tale to tell,  
 And they sole objects of our heed became.  
 I knew them not, but then it so befell, 40  
 As often follows, should some chance betray,  
 That one was forced the other's name to tell,  
 Crying out, " Where can Cianfa then delay ?"  
 And thereon I, to make my Guide give heed,  
 My finger betwixt chin and nose did lay 45  
 If thou art slow to credit, who dost read,  
 What I shall tell, no marvel will it be,  
 For scarce I trust it, though I saw the deed.  
 As I upon them turned mine eyes to see,  
 A serpent with six feet itself did throw 50  
 Straight before one, and bound him utterly ;  
 Around his belly its mid-feet did go,  
 And with its front ones it his arms did bind ,  
 Then on each cheek its teeth wrought cruel woe ,  
 Upon his thighs it stretched the feet behind, 55  
 And 'twixt the two it twisted round its tail,  
 And backward on the reins its folds entwined ,  
 Never so close did ivy tree assail  
 With tiny fangs, as that beast horrible  
 Did on the other's limbs its own impale 60  
 Then, as of hot wax made, they blended well,  
 And each took somewhat of the other's hue ,  
 With neither did its former fashion dwell,  
 As from before the flame that scorches through  
 Upon the paper creeps a tint of brown, 65  
 White dead and gone, and yet the black not true.

<sup>35</sup> The three forms are identified in lines 68, 140, 148, where see notes.

<sup>48</sup> *Cianfa* was one of the Donati. Historians narrate no robbery in which he was implicated, commentators expand the text. Dante may have known *Cianfa* appears in l. 50 transformed into the six-footed serpent. The gesture of l. 45 implies that he recognised a Florentine name.

The other two upon the sight looked down,  
 Each crying, "Agnello, what a change is thine!  
 Lo! nor as two nor yet as one thou'rt shown."  
 Already did the two heads so combine, 70  
 When the two faces melted into one,  
 And lost in each was every feature's line.  
 Of the four lengths of limb two arms were grown,  
 The thighs and legs, the belly and the trunk,  
 Such limbs became as never yet were known. 75  
 All trace of former features now was sunk;  
 The form transformed, as neither, yet as twain,  
 Appeared, and slowly from our gaze it shrunk.  
 As when a lizard, 'neath the fiery reign  
 O' the dogdays, seeks to change its hedgerow bourn, 80  
 It seems like lightning to dart o'er the plain,  
 So came there then, as to the paunches borne  
 Of the other two, a snake of fiery wrath,  
 Livid and black as any peppercorn,  
 And at that part where first our body hath 85  
 Its nourishment, pierced one of them right through,  
 Then swelling, fell before him on the path  
 The pierced one gazed, but no speech did ensue,  
 But with fixed feet he gaping face did show,  
 As though or sleep or fever's stroke he knew. 90  
 He on the serpent, it on him did throw  
 Fixed gaze, it from its mouth, he from his wound,  
 Smoked forth, the smoke clouds mingling in their flow  
 Let Lucan now be silent, where is found  
 How poor Sabellus and Nassidius fell, 95  
 And let him list what from my bow shall sound.

<sup>80</sup> The *Anon* gives a brief account of an Agnolo Brunelleschi of Florence, who first robbed his father and mother, and then used to enter great houses disguised as a beggar and rob them.

<sup>82</sup> The transformation which now begins is that of the serpents, identified in lines 140 and 151 with Francesco Cavalcanti and Buoso Donati.

<sup>94</sup> The passage referred to describes the death of two soldiers in Cato's army from the bites of two species of serpents (*Lucan*, ix 769-804). For the transformation of Cadmus and his wife Harmonia into a serpent, see Ovid, *Met.* iv 563-604, and for that of Arethusa into a fountain, *Met.* v 572-671. With a feeling which reminds us of Turner's wish that the picture which he looked on as his masterpiece should be hung in the National Gallery, side by side with one of Claude's, Dante boldly challenges comparison with two out of the five great poets of antiquity whom he most revered. He had been content to be sixth in that goodly company (*C.* iv 102), now he claims his place among the first three. No one will dispute his claim to that high position, but most of us will probably rest that claim on powers, aims,

Let Ovid cease of Arethuse to tell  
 And Cadmus ; though he change her to a spring,  
 And him to snake, I grudge him not his spell.  
 Two natures face-to face he could not bring 100  
 Transmuted thus, so that on either side  
 Forms quickly changed their bodies' fashioning  
 Each with the other in such manner vied,  
 That the snake parted into twain its tail ,  
 The wounded man's feet were together tied, 105  
 Nor did to legs and thighs like union fail.  
 So that in little time appeared no trace  
 Of juncture, of that change to tell the tale.  
 The cloven tail assumed the shape and space  
 The other lost, and that one's skin became 110  
 Hard, while to this there came a softer grace  
 I saw the arms drawn up at the armpits' frame,  
 And its two feet, of scanty length before,  
 Were stretched as his to less dimensions came ;  
 And the hind-feet, entwisted more and more, 115  
 Became the member that a man conceals,  
 And the poor wretch for his, two members bore.  
 Then from the smoke o'er this and that one steals  
 New tint, and clothes the one with hair all new,  
 While from the other all the hair it peels 120  
 As one rose up, the other downward drew,  
 Yet those malignant lamps they laid not by,  
 'Neath which each face into the other grew ,  
 He who stood drew it to the temples high,  
 And out of the excess of substance there 125  
 Came forth the ears where simple cheeks did lie ,  
 What drew not back but as before did fare  
 Made for the face from that excess a nose,  
 And bade the lips their proper thickness wear

characteristics, which were as unlike as possible to those of Ovid or Lucan, rather than on his successful rivalry with them in the line which each had made his own. What he probably prided himself on was the condensation which compressed into eighty or ninety lines what they would have spread over two or three hundred—the marvellous complication of the double reciprocal metamorphosis, the vividness of the similes in l. 64 and 79, drawn as they were from objects that seemed to lie outside the range of conventional poetic imagery—and in all these he might fairly claim the palm, if such a prize were worth contending for. But we feel also that the poet scoops from his higher level in the very act of competition, that, after all, what we have is a *tour de force* and nothing more, and there are few passages in the commentators on which we dwell with less delight or from which we reap less profit.

He who lay flat his features forward throws, 130  
 And both his ears withdraws within his head,  
 Just as the snail doth with the horns he shows;  
 His tongue, once fit the sounds of speech to shed,  
 Single in form, now split, while into one  
 The forked tongue came, and then the smoke had fled. 135  
 The soul that into bestial shape had grown  
 Sped through the valley, hissing as it went;  
 The other, spitting as it spake, passed on.  
 Then his new shoulders turned he, forward bent,  
 And to the other said, "Let Buoso speed, 140  
 Crawling, like me, along this pit's extent"  
 So that seventh rubbish lot saw I indeed  
 Change and rechange: and if my pen doth stray  
 A little, let the strangeness for me plead.  
 And though upon mine eyes strange wonder lay 145  
 And my mind wandered, yet they could not flee  
 So hidden from me, as they went their way,  
 But I Sciancato Puccio did see,  
 And he alone remained unaltered still  
 Of those who erst came on, companions three; 150  
 The other he whom thou dost weep, Gavilla.

### CANTO XXVI.

*The Eighth Bolgia—The Givers of Evil Counsel—Ulysses and Diomed—  
 The Last Voyage of Ulysses*

REJOICE, O Florence, since so great thy fame,  
 That over sea and land thy wings are spread,  
 And through the depths of Hell resounds thy name

<sup>140</sup> Buoso Donati (or, according to some commentators, Abati) is the man who has become a serpent. Nothing more is known of him than is here implied.

<sup>145</sup> Puccio, of the Galigai family of Florence, is said, like the others, to have been guilty of gross official peculations.

<sup>151</sup> The last of the evil company is not named, but the mention of Gavilla, a town in the Val d'Arno, where many had been ruined and put to death for their share, real or supposed, in the murder of Francesco Cavalcanti, helped the early commentators to identify him (*Anon.*)

<sup>1</sup> The motive of the long list of official robbers is now made clear. It gives the poet an opening for turning on his city with keen incisive irony. She may well rejoice, her fame is spread far and wide, even in Hell. In *Conv.* iv 27 the same feeling takes the more natural form of lamentation. Comp. *Purg.* vi 127-131.

Five such I found among the scoundrel dead,  
 Thy citizens, whence shame my soul doth fill, 5  
 Nor do they with much honour crown thy head;  
 But if at morning dawn come true dreams still,  
 It will be thine in no long time to bear  
 What Prato and the rest desire of ill.  
 Should it come now, 'twere late by many a year 10  
 Since come it must, I would it now were come,  
 Since more 'twill grieve me as life's end draws near.  
 So upward by the self-same stairs we clomb  
 The rocks had made for our descent before,  
 In front my Guide, and I behind did roam, 15  
 And as our lonely way we travelled o'er  
 Among the rock's sharp crags and jutting stones,  
 Feet without hands had been but scanty store.  
 Then grieved I much, and still my spirit groans,  
 When I recall what there my eyes beheld, 20  
 And my free mind a check unwonted owns,  
 That it run not, by Virtue unimpelled,  
 So that if some good star, or aught more high,  
 Good gifts have given, they be not now withheld.  
 As when the peasant on the hill doth lie, 25  
 (What time his face from us is least concealed  
 Who to the world gives light from out the sky,  
 And swarms of flies to gnats their places yield),  
 And down the vale sees many a glow-worm's rays,  
 There where he plucks his grapes or ploughs his field, 30

<sup>7</sup> Comp *Purg* ix 16 for the same belief, which Dante may have derived from Ovid (*Heroid* xix. 195)—“*Namque sub Auroram, jam dormitante lucerna, Somnia quo cerni tempore vera solent*”

<sup>8</sup> Prato is named as a typical representative of the enemies of Florence. The words are, of course, a prophecy after the event, but what special disaster is referred to is matter of conjecture. Such incidents as the faction fights after 1300 (*Vill* viii. 39), or the fall of the Ponte Carrara in 1304 (*Vill* viii. 69), or the great fire of June of the same year (*Vill* viii. 71), may have been in Dante's mind. Possibly the reference may be to the excommunication which the Pope's Legate, the Cardinal di Prato, launched against the citizens of Florence on their refusal to accept his offers of mediation between them and the exiled Bianchi (*Vill* viii. 69, *Faur* i. 193). On this hypothesis, the “other” may be Cardinal Orsini, who was sent by Clement V. in 1306, and who also placed the city under an interdict. The thought of 1 12 seems to be that the speaker would rather that the Divine judgment, which he assumes to be inevitable, would fall on the city which he still loved, while there was yet hope that he might live to see better days for it, and for himself, than when the infirmities of age would make him less able to hold up against the sorrows which touched both it and him.

<sup>9</sup> For the stellar influence on which Dante loved to dwell, see C. xv 55, Par. xxii 110. The “better thing” is the grace of God (C. xxi 82), perhaps the special consecration of Par. xxiv 151 (*Faur* i. 80).

<sup>10</sup> It has been questioned whether the “*luciole*” of the Italians are “glow-worms” or

So many a flame lit up in glowing blaze  
     In the eighth Bolgia there I soon did see,  
     As soon as I upon its depth did gaze;  
 And like to him the bears avenged, when he  
     Eljah's chariot watched till it was gone, 35  
     What time the steeds erect to heaven did flee—  
 For with his eyes he failed to track them on,  
     Or see aught else but one encircling flame,  
     That like a cloud its way right upward won—  
 So in the pit's deep gorge each went and came, 40  
     For not one did the deed of theft display,  
     Yet each enwrapped a sinner and his shame.  
 Erect upon the bridge I then did stay,  
     So that unless my hands a rock had held,  
     Without being pushed, my feet had given way. 45  
 And when my Guide me thus attent beheld,  
     Thus spake he. "In these fires the spirits dwell,  
     Each to be wrapt by that which burns compelled."  
 "Dear Master mine," I said, "what thou dost tell  
     Makes me more certain, but before I deemed 50  
     That so it was, and sought to ask as well  
 Whom doth that fire hold, where apart have streamed  
     The flames at top, as though from out the pyre  
     That o'er Eteocles and his brother gleamed,"  
 He answered me, "There tortured in that fire 55  
     Ulysses is and Diomed, and so  
     They run to vengeance as they ran to ire;  
 And there, within the flame, they wail in woe  
     The ambush of that horse that made the gate,  
     Through which the noble seed of Rome did flow; 60

"fire flies," ll. 31-42 represent the lights as moving, and this is in favour, at first sight, of the latter, on the other hand, it is said that the fire fly proper (*Elater noctilucus*) was unknown in Europe till after the discovery of America, and (2) that the glow worm of Italy (*Lampyrus italica*) shines as it flies as well as when at rest (*Westwood*, l. 248, *Duncan*, pp. 161-172).

<sup>33</sup> The eighth Bolgia is that of the evil counsellors.

<sup>34</sup> Comp. 2 *Kings* ii. 11, 12, 23-25.

<sup>35</sup> Among the many single fires Dante sees a double one. It reminds him of the description given by his favourite Statius (*Theb.* xii. 429-432) of the two sons of Ædipus, Eteocles and Polyneices, who died by each other's hands, and were placed together on the funeral pyre, and then *exundant divite vertice flammæ*, the hatred of the two brothers manifesting itself even in their death (*Diod. Sic.* iv. 67, *Eurip. Phœn.* 55-80, 1368-1433).

<sup>36</sup> Ulysses and Diomed are placed together as having been joined in the fraud practised on Rhesus (*Æn.* i. 469) and in the theft of the Palladium (*Æn.* ii. 263), as well as in the device of the Trojan horse.



Those arts they mourn which for Achilles' fate  
 Still wet with tears Deidamia's cheek,  
 And for Palladium wail disconsolate."  
 "If they within those flames have power to speak,"  
 I said, "O Master, once, yea, twice I pray, 85  
 And that my prayer may count for thousand seek,  
 Thou wilt not to my waiting here say Nay,  
 Until that hornèd flame hard by us come;  
 Thou see'st my yearnings make me lean that way."  
 And he: "Full many praises well become 70  
 Thy prayer, and I receive it graciously;  
 But take good heed that now thy lips be dumb;  
 Leave speech to me. I have in my mind's eye  
 What thou dost wish, for they perchance might scorn,  
 As they were Greeks, with thy words to comply." 75  
 When that the flame was thither onward borne  
 Where to my Leader seemed fit time and place,  
 I heard those words his flowing speech adorn:  
 "O ye whom, twain, one bright fire doth embrace,  
 If while I lived I aught from you could claim, 80  
 Or if that claim filled great or little space,  
 When in the world I wrote my verse of fame,  
 I pray you move not, but let one relate,  
 Where he, storm-driven, to his death-hour came.  
 Of th' ancient flame the horn of highest state, 85  
 Murmuring, began to waver to and fro,  
 Like that which winds tempestuous agitate,  
 And as its point now here, now there did go,  
 As though it were the tongue with which it spake,  
 It utterance gave to voice which thus did flow: 90  
 "When I from Circe parted, who did make  
 Me hide a year and more Gaeta near,  
 Ere from Æneas it that name did take,

<sup>69</sup> Achilles, who had married Deidamia, the daughter of Lycomedes, king of Scyros, was concealed in his court and lived in the disguise of a woman. Ulysses and Diomed discovered his retreat, and persuaded him to come to the help of the Greeks in the Trojan war. Deidamia died of grief.

<sup>75</sup> The Greek heroes, it is assumed, would look with ill-will on the living Florentines, who claimed to be descended from the Romans, and therefore from the Trojans, with whom they had warred. Virgil, as a Mantuan, was free from that objection, and besides could plead, as in l. 87, what he had done to perpetuate their fame.

<sup>81</sup> The narrative that follows is remarkable as having no counterpart in the Trojan cycle of

Neither my son's sweet presence, nor my fear  
 And love for my old father, nor the love 85  
 Which should have given Penelope good cheer,  
 Could check the strong desire I had to rove,  
 And so become experienced in mankind,  
 With human vice and virtue hand in glove.  
 On the wide sea I gave me to the wind, 100  
 With one sole bark, and with that company,  
 The few by whom I ne'er was left behind.  
 Both shores as far as Spain then met mine eye,  
 Far as Morocco and Sardinia's isle,  
 And others that on all sides sea-girt lie. 105  
 I and my friends were old and spent with toil,  
 When to that narrow strait we came at last  
 Where Hercules set landmarks on the soil,  
 That they might never more by man be passed ;  
 On the right hand I left Sevigla's shore, 110  
 And on the left by Ceuta had sailed past.  
 'O brothers,' then I said, 'who evermore  
 Through thousand toils have journeyed to the West,  
 To this short remnant of your life of yore,  
 Still with the sense of watchful insight blest, 115  
 Deny ye not the great experiment  
 Of worlds unpeopled where the sunsets rest ;  
 Let your thoughts be on your high lineage bent :  
 Ye were not born to live as lives the brute,  
 But to seek good and wisdom's high intent.' 120

Greek or Latin writers. Homer makes Ulysses return from the island of Circe to Ithaca, and start afterwards on new voyages (*Od.* x. 210, xi. 119). Here, though a return to Ithaca is not absolutely excluded, the impression left is that he sails westward at once from Gaeta. See *Æn.* vii. 1-4.

<sup>104</sup> Beyond Morocco the voyager passed through the Pillars of Hercules, Calpe and Abile, on either side of the straits of Gibraltar. Ceuta is on the African shore of the straits.

<sup>112</sup> The noble passage that follows has been made familiar to English readers by Tennyson's paraphrase in his *Ulysses*, which, somewhat strangely, appears without any reference to Dante. A comparison with *Æn.* i. 198, Hor. *Od.* i. vii. 25, suggests the thought that, as in the previous canto Dante had measured his strength against Lucan and Ovid, so now he does not shrink from competing with Horace, and even with his own Master and guide, and, so far as he knew him, with Homer. He feels that his fame also to future ages will be as that of the *poeta aovano*. In the absence of any traditional foundation for such a history, we may think of Dante as throwing himself into the mind and temper of the ideal geographical explorer, helped possibly by some intercourse with Marco Polo at Venice, or some knowledge of the Franciscan traveller Rubruquis (*d.* after 1293). See Note on C. xxi. 7. We may compare the language of the former, when he addresses himself to "all who desire to get knowledge of the various races of mankind," and tells them that, since the days of Adam "no man of any nation hath had so much knowledge and experience of the divers parts of the world and its wonders" as he had had (*Par.* i. 1). Compare also the letters of Columbus to Ferdinand and Isabella, as breathing the same spirit.

I made my friends so eager and acute  
     For travel, with that little speech of mine,  
     That no delay thenceforth their mood would suit,  
 And, our stern turned to where the mornings shine,  
     We made our oars as wings for that mad flight,      125  
     Still gaining on the left horizon line:  
 And all the stars I saw that lit the night  
     Of the other pole, our own being sunk so low,  
     It rose not from its ocean bed to sight.  
 Five times was kindled, five times quenched the glow      130  
     By which the moon's inferior face was lit,  
     Since into that deep pass 'twas ours to go,  
 When through the distance dim and dark did flit  
     The vision of a mount that seemed so high  
     I ne'er had looked on any like to it.      135  
 Joyous were we, but soon there came a cry,  
     For from that new land rose a whirlwind blast,  
     And smote the good ship's prow full terribly.  
 Three times amidst the water's whirl it passed,  
     Then on the fourth the stern aloft did rise,      140  
     The prow sank as Another willed, at last  
 The sea's wild waters closed upon our eyes."

### CANTO XXVII.

*The Eighth Bolgia—The State of Romagna—Guido da Montefeltro*

ALREADY was the flame erect and still,  
     Speaking no more and turned from us away,  
     With kindly leave from my sweet Poet's will

126 We have to transport ourselves to the geographical notions of the 13th century. Of the two hemispheres of the earth, one, containing Europe, Asia, and the parts of Africa then known, was thought of as mainly land, the other, unexplored, as covered entirely by the sea, save where the Mountain of Purgatory rises at the antipodes of Jerusalem. Dante assumes that by perpetually steering to the west the voyagers would reach that meridian. On his hypothesis and measurements, the mountain would be 2050 miles from Cadiz, which would give about 13 miles a day for the five months voyage of 1130. One asks conjecturally whether the Mount of Purgatory originated in any dim report of the Peak of Teneriffe brought back by adventurous sailors? The only starting point of the narrative, in all its details absolutely new, is a tradition in Pliny that Ulysses in a second voyage had founded the city of Lisbon. The Canary Islands, of which Teneriffe is one, were known to the ancients as the Fortunate Isles, the Isles of the Blessed (*Phæn.* v. 2). The first record of them in modern travel appears in 1330.

Behind it yet another fire did play,  
 And made us turn our eyes to its high flame 5  
 By sounds confused that from it made their way  
 As that Sicilian bull, whose bellowing came  
 First from his moaning—and that doom was right—  
 Who with his file had modelled out its frame,  
 Bellowed with voice of torment and affright, 10  
 So that, though it was fashioned all of brass,  
 It seemed as if transfixed with sore despite,  
 So, as they had no way nor chink to pass  
 From their source in the flame, the words of woe  
 Took tone and accent as its nature was, 15  
 But after they had travelled from below  
 Up to the point, thus giving it the turn  
 The tongue impressed upon them in their flow,  
 We heard it say, "O thou to whom I yearn  
 To speak, whose speech doth as a Lombard's sound, 20  
 Saying, 'Go thy way, I need not more to learn!'  
 Because I am as somewhat tardy found,  
 Let it not irk thee with me now to speak;  
 Thou see'st it irks not me, though thus fire-bound.  
 If thou but lately thus blind world dost seek, 25  
 Fallen from that sweet Latin land above,  
 Whence I drew all in me that's vile and weak,  
 Tell me if peace or war Romagnuols prove.  
 I from the hills come 'twixt Urbino's town  
 And that high ridge whence Tiber's waters move." 30  
 I was still listening, with my head bent down,  
 When he, my Leader, spoke, and touched my side  
 "Speak thou, for he too is as Latin known."

<sup>6</sup> The bull which Perillus made for Phalaris, the tyrant of Agrigentum, and of which the artist himself was the first victim (Plin. xxiv. 8)

<sup>14</sup> I have followed the *v. l. nel* instead of *del fuoco*

<sup>21</sup> The speaker, as seen in l. 67, is Guido da Montefeltro. The starting-point of his address lies in the fact that in the words which he quotes here, as spoken by Virgil to Ulysses, there are two (*issa* and *adisso*) that are conspicuously of the dialect of Northern Italy. He hears the Lombard speech, he would fain know the last tidings of the cities and men he had left there. The question is passed on to Dante, and gives him the opening he wanted for uttering his thoughts on the political situation at the time when he wrote this Canto—probably, as we have seen in C. xix. 79, 80, about 1314. "Latin" in l. 26 is obviously used in its wider sense as = Italian.

<sup>22</sup> Montefeltro lay between Urbino and the source of the Tiber in Mount Coronaro.

<sup>23</sup> The words look back to the caution that had been given in C. xxvi. 72. Here the soul was not a Greek, but Dante's fellow-countryman.

And I with answer ready-made replied,  
 Beginning then my speech without delay . 25  
 "O soul, who down below thyself dost hide,  
 Romagna never was, nor is this day,  
 Without fierce war within its tyrants' heart ;  
 But none was open when I came away.  
 Ravenna through long years plays unchanged part ; 40  
 The Eagle of Polenta nestles there,  
 And its wide wings o'er Cervia doth dispart.  
 The land which passed through trial long and drear,  
 And laid the French in heaps with bloody sword,  
 Between the green claws doth again appear . 45  
 Verrucchio's mastiff old and new-sprung lord,  
 Who poor Montagna treacherously slew,  
 Have with their teeth, as with an auger, bored.  
 Lamone's city and Santerno's too  
 Are ruled by lion's whelp in argent nest, 50  
 Who between heat and frost takes party new ;

<sup>37</sup> The province then known as Romagna was bounded on the S by Pesaro, on the N by the Panaro and the Po, on the E by the Adriatic, and on the W by Tuscany. Ravenna was its capital, and it included also the sub-provinces of Bologna, Forlì, and Ferrara. The name was given (Lat. *Romandiola* = Little Rome as Byzantium had become the New Rome), when the Exarchs made Ravenna the capital of the Western Empire.

<sup>38</sup> The state of Romagna in 1284 is described in a chronicle of Bologna (*Murat* xviii 286) in terms that remind us of those in which Thucydides described the state of Greece during the Peloponnesian War (iii 82-84). Every city was torn in pieces by Guelph and Ghibelline factions, by local and personal jealousies. Hardly a day passed without a murder, hardly a night without a fire, not from accident.

<sup>39</sup> The eagle of Polenta (his arms were an eagle *gules* on a field *or*) is Guido da Polenta, the father of the Francesca of C v. He became master of Ravenna after a tumult in 1275, was said to have placed his province under the protection of the Pope, was deposed and expelled in 1296, was again in possession of Ravenna in 1300, but was probably not as yet, when Dante wrote, known to him, as his nephew was afterwards, as a friend and protector (*Scart*).

<sup>40</sup> Cervia, a seaport twelve miles from Ravenna.

<sup>41</sup> The land is Forlì, and the story runs thus. Pope Martin IV sent an expedition, consisting mainly of French and Provençal troops, to take possession of Forlì (1282). Guido da Montefeltro (to whose spirit Dante is now speaking) was then in command there. By his counsels, the city gates were left open and the soldiers withdrawn. The French, counting on an easy victory, entered the city, which they looked on as deserted, were taken as in a trap, and massacred.

<sup>42</sup> A *hoovert* in a field *or* were the arms of the Ordelaffi, then the lords of Forlì. One of the uncertain Dante traditions is, that he was for a time secretary to Scarpetta degli Ordelaffi.

<sup>43</sup> The "mastiff old" (the word may refer either to character or armorial bearings, or both) is Malatesta (*nomen et omen*) of Rimini, the father of the Paolo and Gianciotto of C v. The "new-sprung lord" is Malatestino, their elder brother, who succeeded his father in 1312. Verrucchio was a castle given by the people of Rimini to Malatesta. Montagna di Parciade, the head of the Ghibellines, was slain by Malatesta and the Guelphs (*Murat* xv 894, 895). The line that follows might almost serve as a motto for the Italian history of the period, as summing up the policy of well-nigh every popular leader, Podestà, Capitano del Popolo, soldier of fortune, whether Guelph or Ghibelline (*Bart*).

<sup>44</sup> Lamone, the river on which Faenza stands, Santerno, that of Imola. The "lion's whelp" describes the armorial bearings of Magninardo Pagano, who became lord of Imola in 1296 (*Murat* xiv 1113). The next line points to the shifting policy of the soldier of fortune, now a Ghibelline, now fighting on the side of the Guelph. Florentines at Campaldino in 1289 (*Vill* vii 149), and joining Charles of Valois (hence Dante's indignation) on his entry into Florence in 1300.

And that whose slopes by Savio are caressed,  
 As it lies there between the mount and plain,  
 So midway lives, half-free and half-oppressed.  
 And now, I pray thee, who thou art explain ; 55  
 Be not more stubborn than the rest are found,  
 So may thy name on earth its place maintain."  
 And when the flame had made its wonted sound  
 A little while, its point waved to and fro,  
 And then their way the whispering murmurs wound : 60  
 "If I had deemed my answer e'er should go  
 To one whose steps should to the world return,  
 This flame would stand, nor further flickering show ;  
 But inasmuch as from this dismal bourne 65  
 No living man returns, if truth I hear,  
 I make my answer with no fear of scorn.  
 I was a man of arms, then Cordelier,  
 Deeming that I, so girt, might make amend ,  
 And true enough that deeming might appear,  
 But that the High Priest—evil be his end !— 70  
 Sent me back yet again to former crime ,  
 And how and why I will thou apprehend.  
 While I in bone and flesh yet lived my time  
 In form my mother gave me, every deed  
 Did with the fox-mood, not the lion's, chime. 75  
 The shifts and byways underground that lead,  
 All these I knew, and so applied each art,  
 The fame thereof made all the world give heed ;

<sup>55</sup> The city on the Savio is Cesena, in whose local situation Dante sees the type of its political. It was conspicuous for its frequent changes of Podestà and its expulsion of suspected nobles (*Murat* xiv 1121).

<sup>61</sup> The life of Guido da Montefeltro is so conspicuously typical of the time that it may be well to fill up Dante's outlines. Born before 1250, he was made captain of the Romagna Ghibellines in 1274, defeated the Guelphs of Bologna and Malatesta in 1275, and became master of Cesena in 1276; he was Capitano of Forlì, and occupied Romagna against the Pope. In 1286, if not earlier, he was reconciled to the Papacy, but was elected as their general by the Ghibelline Pisans in 1288, and was again excommunicated. He defended Pisa against the Guelphs and restored order and good government there, but, after taking Cesena in 1293, was expelled from Pisa in 1294. He was then once more reconciled to the Church and became a Franciscan friar. He died in 1298 and was buried at Assisi (?). Dante speaks of him in *Conv.* iv 58 as *il nobilissimo nostro Latino* (*Murat*, *Vill.*, and many chronicles in *Scott*). The narrative that follows gives the poet's account of the closing events of his life. His son is found in *Purg.* v 88.

<sup>67</sup> Cordelier, the popular name for a Franciscan friar, from the cord which was the badge of the Order. See C. xvi. 106.

<sup>70</sup> The high priest, *Pontifex Summus*, is Boniface VIII.

<sup>75</sup> The history of Guido would seem to indicate a combination of the fox and lion natures, rather than one exclusively vulpine. A chronicler of Asti (*Murat* xl. 188) describes him as "*sapientissimus, fortis, largus, et callidissimus in bellando*." One of Pisa, however, relates that when he appeared against the Florentines, they raised the cry, "*Ecco la volpe*."

And when I knew that I had reached that part  
 Of life when for each single soul 'tis right 80  
 To reef the sails and coil the ropes apart,  
 That which before had pleased now gave despoite.  
 Contrite and shriven, I knelt on bended knees,  
 Ah woe is me ! and had found help of might,  
 But that the chief of our new Pharisees, 85  
 At war with foes hard by the Lateran—  
 Not Saracens nor even Jews were these,  
 Those foes of his were Christians, every man,  
 And none to conquer Acre went to fight,  
 Nor trafficked in the land of the Soldan. 90  
 Nor sacred orders nor his post of might  
 Did he regard, nor yet that cord of mine,  
 Which whoso wore grew thinner in men's sight,  
 But, as Sylvester was by Constantine  
 Called from Soratt', his leprosy to heal, 95  
 So he called me, as skilful to divine,  
 For that proud fever, cure to work his weal  
 He asked my counsel and I held my peace,  
 For those his words did drunkard's thoughts reveal.  
 Then he, ' Let not thine heart be ill at ease , 100  
 I from all sin absolve thee ; teach thou me  
 How Palestrina from the earth may cease ,

<sup>80</sup> The passage is almost a rhymed paraphrase of *Conv* iv 28, in which Dante dwells on the wisdom of using old age as a time for meditation, and points to Lancelot of the Lake who became a hermit, and Guido da Montefeltro as examples. The facts recorded here may have come to Dante's knowledge after he wrote the *Convito*.

<sup>85</sup> The new Pharisees are the *Curia Romana* as it was under Boniface. The term was constantly applied by Frederick II to the Popes with whom he was in conflict (*Asinorum*, ii 137). The 'foes' were the house of Colonna whose possessions were near the Lateran. Boniface quarrelled with them about a treasure which they were accused of appropriating, deposed the Cardinals who belonged to their family, laid waste their palace, and issued a bull against them (*Mura* xviii 301, *Vill* viii 21, *Sord*).

<sup>86</sup> Acre, the last possession of the Christians in Palestine, fell into the hands of the Saracens in 1201. The Colonnas were to be the objects of the next crusade.

<sup>87</sup> The 'cord,' which was, in idea at least the badge of poverty and abstinence. C xvi 106, *Par* xi 87, xii 132.

<sup>88</sup> The story of the donation of Constantine is told as it passed current in the 13th century as Dante found it in his master's *Lettere* (ii 25). Constantine like another Naaman came to Sylvester, then in retirement at Soracte, now Sant Oreste, to be healed of leprosy. was healed in the waters of baptism, and then assigned the States of the Church to the Bishops of Rome in perpetuity. *Comp* C xix 115.

<sup>89</sup> The words imply (1) that the claim to absolve by anticipation was not unknown, (2) that Dante as a theologian rejected it as untenable and contrary to the faith.

<sup>90</sup> Penestrino (= Palestrina) was a stronghold of the Colonnas. As told by *Vill* viii 23, the story runs that Boniface invited them to Rieti, and on their submission freed them from excommunication and promised to restore them to their possessions. In the meantime, while they were off their guard, he took and destroyed the fortress of Palestrina on the hill, and built a new town, Civita Papale, on the plain. And this, Villani says, was by the advice of Guido da Montefeltro, who spoke in the very words of l 120, '*Piurima eis pollicemini, pauca observate*'.

I, as thou know'et, have power to ope for thee,  
 Or close, Heaven's gates, wherefore the keye are twain,  
 Which he held cheap who here preceded me.' 105

HIS weighty reasonings then did me constrain,  
 There where it seemed worst counsel to be dumb,  
 And I said, 'Since, O Father, every stain  
 Thou dost wash off that on me now must come,  
 Promise profuse, fulfilment scant and late, 110  
 Will make thee triumph in thy lofty home.'

Then Francis came, when I had passed death's gate,  
 For me, but one of those swarth cherubin  
 Said, 'Take him not; defraud not my estate;  
 Down 'mong my varlets he must needs come in, 115  
 Because he gave the counsel fraudulent,  
 For which till now I at his hair have been,  
 There is no pardon for the impenitent,  
 And penitence goes not with evil will,  
 Things thus opposed may not by us be blent.' 120

Ah me! what anguish through my soul did thrill  
 When he had seized me, saying, 'Thou, may be,  
 Deem'dst not that I could boast logician's skill!'

So he to Minos brought me, and then he  
 Eight times around his strong back curled his tail 125  
 And bit it in his wrath's ferocity,  
 And said, 'With sinners of the fiery veil  
 He goes.' And so I'm lost in this drear seat,  
 And in this garb I tell my sorrow's tale."

And when he thus had made his speech complete, 130  
 The flame departed, moaning yet once more,  
 Its sharp horn writhing in vibrations fleet.

112 It was the belief of those of whom Milton speaks, who—

"Dying, put on the weeds of Dominic,  
 Or in Franciscan think to pass disguised,"

that they were at the hour of death taken under the protection of the patron saint of the Order, that his cord drew them from the pit of Hell. The phrase 'swarth cherubin' implies the theory that some of each grade of the heavenly hierarchy had taken their part in the great rebellion, and that therefore there were Cherubin and Seraphin, Principalities and Powers, in Hell. *EPM* vi 12 would obviously lend a colour to such a belief.

118 The accusing angel reasons as Aquinas reasons (*SUMMA* iii. qm 86, art 2). Absolution assumes penitence. There can be no penitence for a sin when the man intends to commit it. Absolution by anticipation is, therefore, a contradiction in terms.

119 The act as thus described placed the offender in the eighth circle, among the evil counsellors. Not even St. Francis could save him from that condemnation.



My Leader then and I passed on before,  
 Up o'er the rock another arch above,  
 Which hides the fosse where they pay forfeit sore 135  
 Who, sowing discord, heavy-burdened move.

### CANTO XXVIII.

*The Ninth Bolgia—The Schismatics—Mahomet, Ali Bertrande de Born,  
 and Others.*

Who with free speech unrhymed could utter well  
 And fully all the blood and many a wound  
 Which now I saw, though oft the tale he tell?  
 Each tongue, I trow, too feeble would be found,  
 By reason that our speech and mental sight 5  
 For such great themes have far too small a bound.  
 If all the host should once again unite  
 Which of old time upon the fateful land  
 Of Puglia mourned the bloodshed of the fight,  
 Caused by long war and by the Romans' hand, 10  
 When of the rings were made such high-heaped spoil,  
 As Livy writes, whose words unerring stand,  
 With that which felt the pain of blows erewhile,  
 'Gainst Robert Guiscard in hot warfare set,  
 And that whose bones are gathered in the soil 15  
 Of Ceperan, where each Apulian met  
 A traitor proved, at Tagliacozzo too,  
 Where old Alardo, unarmed, conquered yet,

<sup>1</sup> The pilgrims enter on the ninth Bolgia, that of the authors of schism.

<sup>4</sup> An obvious reproduction of *Æn* vi 624-627

<sup>10</sup> A 2 / gives "Romans," but it was quite after Dante's manner to describe them by the name of the older race, on whom he looked as the founders of Rome. The reference is (1) to the Samnite wars, of which Apulia was the chief scene, (2) to the slaughter of Cannæ, after which Hannibal sent to Carthage three bushels of rings taken from the corpses of the slain (*Liv* xxiii. 12). Dante refers again to the fact in *Cow* iv 5

<sup>13</sup> Robert Guiscard, son of Tancred de Hauteville of Normandy, who defeated the Papal and Imperial forces at the battle of Civitella, the Hastings of Italy, and was afterwards recognised by the Pope as Duke of Apulia (*Kington*, i 15, *Vill* iv 28, 29).

<sup>16</sup> Ceperano was the scene of a battle (which Dante seems to mix up with the greater battle of Benevento) between Manfred and Charles of Anjou, in which the former was defeated and slain. The Apulians for the most part fled (*Vill* vii 5-9, *Murat* xi. 158).

<sup>17</sup> Tagliacozzo, a castle in the Abruzzi, where in 1268 the young Conradin was defeated by Charles of Anjou. Alardo di Valleri was one of Charles's French generals, by whose wise strategy rather than mere force of arms the victory was gained (*Vill* vii. 26, 27).

If some with limbs lopped off, and some pierced through,  
 Should show, they would no parallel provide 20  
 To that ninth Bolgia's fashion, foul to view.  
 A cask that loses centre board or side  
 Was never so pierced through as I saw one  
 Rent from chin down to where hind-parts divide ,  
 Between his legs his entrails all hung down, 25  
 His heart's recess and that foul sack lay bare,  
 Where what we eat as excrement is thrown.  
 And while on him with fixed eyes I stare,  
 He looked at me, and with his hands his breast  
 Oped wide, and said, " See how myself I tear , 30  
 See how Mahomet maimed is manifest  
 Before me Ali goes and wails aloud,  
 Sharp cloven from the chin to forelock's crest,  
 And all the rest of whom thou see'st the crowd  
 Were sources in their lifetime of offence 35  
 And schism , therefore mangled are they bowed.  
 A devil stands behind, of cunning fence,  
 Who with sharp blows and stroke of sharpest sword  
 Tortures each soul of all this pack immense :  
 When we have travelled o'er that road abhorred, 40  
 Because our wounds are closed again, each one,  
 Ere pass before him any of our horde.  
 But who art thou who from the crag look'st on,  
 Seeking perchance thy torment to delay  
 Which is adjudged thee for thy ill deeds done ?" 45  
 " Not dead is he, nor guilt leads him this way,"  
 My Master said, " that he should tortured be ;  
 But that he may experience full assay,  
 I, who am dead, must lead by Heaven's decree,  
 And guide him through all Hell from round to round ; 50  
 And thus is true just as I tell it thee."

<sup>20</sup> The horrible description seems in parts an echo of *Lucan* ix 773 I have euphemised the over-bold plainness of the original

<sup>21</sup> The standpoint from which Dante looks on Mahomet, not as the founder of a new religion, but as the author of a schism, like that of the Novatianists or the Donatists, is singularly characteristic of mediæval thought. In the form of punishment he seems to have had in his mind the literal meaning of the word. The author of division is himself divided. The special form of Ali's doom, in which the face, which in Mahomet was left whole, is cloven from brow to chin, indicates apparently his position as the author of a new schism among the followers of the false prophet

<sup>22</sup> A list of those whom Dante had in his mind would be an instructive commentary, from his standpoint, on Church history, but we must acquiesce in his reticence.

More than a hundred, when they heard that sound,  
 Stopped in the fosse and turned to look on me,  
 Forgetting, in their wonder, each his wound.  
 "To Fra Dolcino say thou this, that he 55  
 (Thou who perchance wilt soon see daylight's glow),  
 Unless to join me here he willing be,  
 Should store himself with food, lest piled-up snow  
 Should to the Novarese bring victory,  
 Which else to gain were no light task, I trow." 60  
 So, with one foot for turning lifted high,  
 Spake Mahomet to me the words I write;  
 Then on the ground he laid it to pass by.  
 Another, with his throat pierced through outright,  
 And his nose lopped from just below the eyes, 65  
 And but one ear remaining, at the eight  
 Stopped with the rest to gaze in sheer surprise,  
 And then before those others oped his throat,  
 Which all without was stained in blood-red guise,  
 And said, "O thou, who bear'st of guilt no note, 70  
 Whom I of old in Latin land have seen,  
 If too great likeness tend not to promote  
 Deceit, remember Pier of Medicine,  
 If e'er thou turn'st to see the pleasant plain  
 Which doth from Vercell' to Marcabo lean, 75  
 And say to Fano's best and worthiest twain,  
 As Guido and as Angiolello known,  
 That, if our gift of foresight be not vain,

<sup>55</sup> In the mention of Fra Dolcino we have a partial glimpse into what such a commentary would have been. All that we know of him comes from his enemies and judges, and their story is sufficiently black. He appears as a member of an Order of "Apostolic Brothers," founded by Gerard Sagarelli of Parma in 1260. He was said to proclaim that the Church of Rome was the great harlot of the Apocalypse, and to have taught the community of goods and women, and frightful stories were told of his personal licentiousness. He had about 1400 followers, chiefly in Northern Italy. Clement V. proclaimed a crusade against him, and he was besieged in a mountain stronghold near Vercelli by an army of which Novara furnished the largest contingent. The fort was taken in March 1307, a heavy fall of snow having deprived the beleagued of all provisions from without, and after three months in prison he and many of his followers were burnt alive at Novara (*Murat* ix. in *Scart* 431-460, Milman, *L. C.* vii. 355-368). See Mariotti (i.e. Galleaga), *Fra Dolcino*, for a full history of the man and of his times.

<sup>75</sup> Pier de' Cattani of Medicina, near Bologna, was notable as having sown discords among the cities and lords of the Romagna, specially between Guido da Polenta (see note on C. xxvii. 41) of Ravenna and Malatestino of Rimini, carrying to each evil reports against the other. The man must have been well known to Dante in his later years (*Anon. Fior* in *Scart*).

<sup>76</sup> The description includes the great plain of Lombardy, from Vercelli in the N.W. to Marcabò, a fortress in the territory of Ravenna, near the mouth of the Po.

<sup>77</sup> Guido del Cassero and Angiolello of Cagnano were two of the leading men of Fano, a

They from their ship shall overboard be thrown,  
 Drowned near Cattolica, in no long while, 80  
 Through crime of one as fellest tyrant known.  
 Between Majolica and Cyprus isle  
 Neptune ne'er saw a crime so great as this  
 Wrought by fierce pirates or by Argive guile.  
 That traitor who one orb of sight doth miss, 85  
 And holds the land which one who is with me  
 Would fain had never fed those eyes of his,  
 Will bid them come to speech of amity,  
 And then so act that 'gainst Focara's wind  
 They will not need or prayer or piteous cry." 90  
 And I to him: "Speak out and tell thy mind.  
 If 'tis thy will that I of thee should speak,  
 Who is it would that sight so bitter find?"  
 Then did he lay his hand upon the cheek  
 Of one of those his mates and oped his jaw, 95  
 Crying, "This is he; he cannot silence break.  
 He, when in exile, crushed the doubting awe  
 Of Cæsar, saying that it breeds but ill  
 When one forearmed delays the sword to draw."  
 Ah me! what terror seemed his soul to fill, 100  
 With tongue in throat thus slit and voiceless left,  
 That Curio, once so bold of speech and will.

city on the Adriatic, about thirty miles from Rimini. Malatestino, lord of the latter city (see note on C xxvii 46) wishing to obtain possession of Fano, invited them to meet him at Cattolica, on the Adriatic coast, and ordered the sailors of the ship by which they came to throw them into the sea (*Anon. Fior in Scart*) The deed filled all Romagna with the horror which the next line expresses.

<sup>82</sup> Cyprus as the most eastern, Majorca, as the most western, of the islands in the Mediterranean.

<sup>84</sup> "Argive" is probably used for the Greek corsairs who infested the Adriatic Gulf

<sup>86</sup> Malatestino was commonly known as the "man with the eye," having lost one. He was, it will be remembered, the half-brother of Gianciotto and Paolo, and also of Pandolfo, the best of the family. The Counts of Ghiarola were descended from Paolo (*Muras* xv 896, in *Scart*)

<sup>88</sup> The wind of Focara, a mountain near Cattolica, was proverbially dangerous to sailors in that region. Sailors used to pray that "God would keep them from that wind." The victims of Malatesta's fraud would neither need nor profit by such prayers.

<sup>90</sup> The special form of mutilation from which Curio (l 102) suffered was that his tongue was split. The advice which he gave Cæsar is found in two memorable lines of Dante's favourite Lucan (l 280):—

*"Dum trepidant nullo firmata robore partes,  
Tolle moras, semper nocuit differre paratis"*

Commentators, so far as I know, have not noticed how closely the preceding lines must have connected themselves, except perhaps in the "*volentes*," with Dante's fortunes. "We," Curio, "*audax venati lingua*," says to Cæsar, before he crossed the Rubicon—" *pellimur e patris laribus, patimurque volentes exitum* " Advice, like Curio's, from the fierce Ghibelline associates with whom his own exile brought him into contact, may often have presented itself as a temptation against which Dante had to fight by representing to himself the ultimate outcome of such words for the speaker and those who followed his counsels.

And one of hands both left and right bereft,  
 Lifting the stumps up in the murky air,  
 So that the blood his face all filthy left, 105  
 Cried, "Mosca too thou shalt in memory bear,"  
 Who cried (Ah me!), 'A deed done, there's an end!'  
 Ill seed for all whom Tuscan land doth rear."  
 "And death to all thy race," did I append.  
 Then he, with sorrow heaped on sorrow high, 110  
 Passed on, as one whose griefs to madness tend.  
 But I remained to watch that company,  
 And saw a thing which well might make me dread  
 To tell it without proof of verity,  
 But that my conscience stands me in good stead, 115  
 Companion good, that makes a man full bold,  
 By breastplate of pure heart encompassed.  
 I then beheld, and still seem to behold,  
 A trunk without a head pass on before,  
 As passed the others of that mournful fold, 120  
 And by the locks its head, lopped off, it bore,  
 Hung in the hand, in fashion lantern-wise,  
 And "Ah me!" muttering, gazed with looks full sore,  
 And for itself itself a lamp supplies,  
 And they were two in one and one in two 125  
 How it could be He knows who doth devise.  
 And when towards the bridge's foot it drew,  
 To bring its words more near, with head in hand,  
 His arms he lifted up, full in our view,  
 And said, "The pain thou now canst understand, 130  
 Who, breathing life, art come the dead to see;  
 See if aught great as this thou e'er hast scanned,

104 The story of Mosca de' Lamberti carries us back to the Buondelmonte tragedy, in which Dante saw the beginning of evils for himself and his city. A young member of that family in 1225 was betrothed to a maiden of the house of the Amidei. He was faithless to his promise, and married instead the daughter of one of the Donati. The Amidei and all their friends met to concert measures of revenge. Various plans were proposed, but Mosca clenched the matter with the words, "*Cosa fatta capo ha.*" And so on Easter morning, as Buondelmonte was riding near the Ponte Vecchio, he was assassinated by the Uberti, Amidei, Lamberti, and others. Here also we note the protest of the high souled exile against the most popular of the maxims of the Italian *vendetta*.

115 The words are possibly more than a mere attestation to clothe a poetic fiction, after the manner of the *Arabian Nights* or *Robinson Crusoe*, with an air of verisimilitude. Dante's conscience is so clear from the guilt of giving false and treacherous counsels that he has courage to describe its penalty, however horrible.

And that thou may'st true news report of me,  
 Know thou my name, Bertram dal Bornio,  
 Who John, the king, misled to treachery, 185  
 The son and sire I made as foe to foe,  
 Even as Ahithophel made Absalom  
 And David, by his counsels fraught with woe.  
 Because I severed ties of kin and home,  
 I bear, ah me! my own skull severed here 190  
 From its true stock, which doth in this trunk come:  
 Measure for measure is in me seen clear."

## CANTO XXIX.

*The Tenth Bolgia—The Alchemists—Grifolino of Arezzo—Capocchio.*

THAT numerous people and their diverse woes  
 So made mine eyes, as drunk with grief, o'er-wrought,  
 That they would fain have found in tears repose;  
 But Virgil said, "Why gaze in eager thought?  
 Why doth thy glance so fixedly abide 3  
 Down there among those maimed shades sorrow-fraught?  
 I' the other pits thus hast thou never pried.  
 Think, if thou deem'st thou canst the shadows count,  
 For miles a score and two the vale winds wide,

<sup>184</sup> Bertram dal Bornio, Viscount of Altaforte, in Gascony (C. xxix. 99), was conspicuous as warrior, statesman, troubadour (*V. & U.* 2). He instigated Prince Henry, the eldest son of Henry II., to rebel against his father. On the Prince's death in 1183, the king besieged and took Altaforte, but pardoned Bertram. After this he stirred up a rebellion against Alfonso II. of Aragon, took part in the war between Richard I. and Philip Augustus, and finally died a Cistercian monk.

<sup>185</sup> The readings vary between *re giovane* ("the young king") and "*Giovanni*." Historically the former is correct, but MSS. and early commentators support the latter. Dante's knowledge of the facts may have been as vague as that of his interpreters. On the whole, it seems probable that *giovane* was a correction for the sake of accuracy (*See Barl., Scart., and Arrio* 44).

<sup>187</sup> See *Sam.* xv. 12, xvi. 25, xvii.

<sup>1</sup> The absorbed contemplation falls in with what has been said above as to the thoughts which passed through the poet's mind as he compared the authors of divisions in the past with those among whom his own lot was cast.

<sup>2</sup> The one instance of a definite measurement in the *Inferno*. If this was the size of the ninth Bolgia, those above it and the higher circles must have been much larger. Another of eleven miles appears in C. xxx. 26. The Rossetti school of interpreters make much of the fact that the former was said to be the circuit of the territory (*Faz.* ii. 31), the latter of the walls of Rome.

And now our feet above the moon do mount ; 10  
 Brief is the season now to us allowed,  
 And the unseen exceeds the seen's amount."  
 "If thou hadst given," then answered I aloud,  
 "Due heed unto the cause that made me gaze,  
 Thou this my lingering hadst perchance allowed." 15  
 My Leader then passed on, and in his ways  
 I followed, even as I answer made,  
 And added, "In that den whereon I gaze  
 With eager look, in durance sad is laid  
 A spirit of my blood, that weeps and wails 20  
 The guilt for which such heavy fine is paid."  
 Then said my Guide, "Take heed no thought assail  
 Thy mind to bend it there where he doth dwell,  
 Elsewhere look thou ; let him to move thee fail,  
 For at the bridge's foot I saw him well, 25  
 Pointing at thee with finger threateningly,  
 And heard his name pronounced *Geri del Bell'*.  
 Then, so absorbed in seeking to descry  
 His fate who *Altaforte* once possessed,  
 Thou saw'st him not ; so he away did fly." 30  
 "O Leader mine," so him I then addressed,  
 "That bloody death, which hath no vengeance found  
 From any by the self-same wrong oppressed,  
 Made him thus wrathful. hence he turned him round,  
 So deem I, and would speak no word to me, 35  
 And this hath made my pity more abound."  
 So spake we, far as the first place whence we  
 Could from the crag look o'er the other vale,  
 And, had we more light, to its bottom see.  
 When we had gained the farthest cloister's pale 40  
 Of *Malebolge*, and its brotherhood  
 Before our gaze their aspect could unveil,

<sup>10</sup> The description, looking to the fact of its being full moon (C. xx 127), indicates *circa* 1 P. M. The journey had been begun the previous evening, and was to be completed within twenty-four hours, so that there remained only about five hours (C. xxxiv 68).

<sup>20</sup> *Geri del Bello* belonged to the family of the *Alighieri*, and was first cousin to the poet's father (Litta. *Art. Alighieri*). He was in ill repute, as having stirred up strife among the family of the *Gemini* (?) or the *Sacchetti* (?). Finally, those whom he had sought to divide united against him and put him to death. The menacing gesture is explained in l. 32, which is, in fact, Dante's *apologia* for not having taken up what would by others have been thought a sufficient cause for a hereditary *vendetta*.

<sup>41</sup> The last *Belgia* is that of the forgers, coiners, and the like

Laments pierced through mine ears of divers mood,  
 Like arrows with their sharp points tipt with woe;  
 So with my hands upon mine ears I stood. 45  
 What pain would be if to one pit did flow  
 The ills that in Valdicchian's spitals be,  
 As July and September come and go,  
 Or what Maremma and Sardinia see,  
 So was it there; such stench rose evermore 50  
 As comes from limbs that rot in misery.  
 We wound our way adown the farther shore  
 From the long crag, but on the left hand still,  
 And now with clearer vision looked I o'er,  
 Towards the pit where she who works the will 55  
 Of our high Lord, unerring Righteousness,  
 Doth scourge the forgers who her record fill.  
 I cannot think that that was worse distress  
 Which touched the eick of all Ægina's race,  
 When all the air was filled with noisomeness, 60  
 So that all living creatures died apace,  
 E'en to the worm, and then each ancient clan  
 (So do the poets the old story trace)  
 From seed of ants a new-born brood began,  
 Than what we here beheld, in that dim vale, 65  
 Where souls in diverse heaps, lie pale and wan  
 This on the belly, that on back did trail,  
 Each of the other, eome on all fours crept,  
 And made their way along the gloomy dale.  
 Speechless and pacing slow we onwarde stept, 70  
 Gazing, and listening to that suffering crew,  
 Who power to raise their forms no longer kept,  
 There leaning on each other I saw two,  
 As plate on plate doth lean when set to heat,  
 O'er whom from head to foot a foul scab grew, 75

<sup>49</sup> The Valdicchiana lies between Arezzo, Cortona, Chiusi, and Montepulciano. The Chiana, which flowed through it, made it marshy and malarious. For the Maremma, see C. xxv. 19, *Purg.* v. 134. Sardinia has at all times stood low in the health scale. The hot summer months were of course then, as now, the most fatal period in such regions. Had Dante, as a student of medicine, visited the hospitals? See C. xxx. 53.

<sup>50</sup> The description is drawn from Ovid (*Met.* vii. 523-660). Juno sends a pestilence on Ægina, and the king, Æacus, is the only survivor. He prays to Zeus to fill his lands again with inhabitants as numerous as those of an anthill at his feet, and the ants are changed into men, who thence take the name of Myrmidons (Greek *myrmex* = ant).



And never saw I currycomb so fleet  
 Of stable-boy whose master for him stays,  
 Or one who fain would to his bed retreat,  
 As each of them his nails' sharp bite always  
 Passed o'er his limbs for that exceeding sore 80  
 Of leprous itch that nothing else allays ;  
 And so their nails that scab rubbed evermore,  
 As doth the knife the scales of scarda scrape,  
 Or other fish, with largest covered o'er.  
 " O thou who with thy fingers peel'st thy shape," 85  
 Began to one of them my Leader true,  
 " And, as with pincers, mak'st thy flesh to gape,  
 Tell me if any Latin with this crew  
 His dwelling hath ! so may thy nails suffice  
 Through endless time their taskwork to renew ! " 90  
 " Latins are we, whom, worn with agonies,  
 Thou see'st thus tortured," weeping answered one,  
 " But who art thou who ask'st for our replies ?"  
 Then spake my Guide : " My course doth onward run  
 With this man, yet alive, down steep rocks sheer ; 95  
 Not till I've shown him Hell is my task done "  
 Then did they cease this one on that to bear,  
 And each one, all a-tremble, turned to me,  
 With others who the echoing sound did hear.  
 Then my good Master turned my face to see, 100  
 And said, " Tell them what thou dost care to say."  
 And I began, since he so bade it be :  
 " So may your memory never steal away  
 From human minds in that first world up there,  
 But still in life through many a long year stay ! 105  
 Say who ye are, and whence your race and where ;  
 Let not your foul and miserable plight  
 Make you afraid before me to appear "  
 " I of Arezzo am : Siena's knight,  
 Alberto," said one, " sent me to the stake ; 110  
 What brought me here is other matter quite.

<sup>88</sup> The *scarda* is a fresh-water fish, identified as the *Cyprinus latius*, conspicuous for its big scales, probably a carp

<sup>100</sup> The Aretine is identified as a Maestro Griffolino, a charlatan of the Cagliostro type. He came to Siena and promised Albert or Albergo, the natural or adopted son of the Bishop of

'Tis true to him, in mirthful jest I spake,  
 I knew the secret through the air to fly,  
 And he, o'er-curions, senses scarce awake,  
 Wished me to show the art; and when that I 115  
 No Dædalus made him, he made me burn  
 By one who did as with a son comply;  
 But to this Bolgia in its tenth last turn  
 Minos condemned me, he who cannot err,  
 For all that I as alchemy did learn." 120  
 Then said I to the poet, "Was there e'er  
 Like to Siena's, race so vain and weak?  
 E'en from the French the palm they surely bear.'  
 And when the other leper heard me speak  
 He answered, "Well, save Stricca, he is one 125  
 Whose moderate living ne'er its bounds did break,  
 And Niccol', who the inventor's honours won,  
 For his new skill in clove's luxurious use,  
 In that wide garden where such seed is grown;  
 Save, too, the band on whom, with hand profuse, 130  
 Caccia d' Ascian squandered wood and vine,  
 And he, the dazed one, lavished e'en his Muse.  
 But that thou know who doth with thee combine  
 Against the Sieneſe, thy glance turn here,  
 So that my face may answer well to thine; 135

that city, that he would teach him to fly, and so help him in his love adventures. When he failed to keep his promise, Albert complained to the Bishop, who accused Grifolino of being involved in the heresy of the Patarini (one of the wild half-Gnostic, half-Communist sects of the 13th century), and had him burnt. His place in the tenth Bolgia, however, was not due to that sin, but to the deeper guilt of alchemy, in which Dante saw an attempt to violate the laws of God for the sake of man's greed (*Scart*)

123 We note the dexterity with which the poet combines his two antipathies. His dislike of the French may have started either from his residence at Paris, probably between 1284 and 1288 (*Inf.* p. 96), or his contact with Charles of Valois and his followers.

125 The exceptions are, of course, as in C. xxi. 41, emphatically ironical. Little is known individually of those who are here named. What had disgusted Dante was the sumptuous luxury of the Sieneſe nobles, of whom the Salimbeni and the Bonsignori were the most conspicuous. The new use of the clove (the tradition, unless it is an invention of the commentators, was that he had sown the clove in contact with other seeds, and that the plants had thereby gained a more delicate flavour) seems to have stirred the scorn of a man who was habitually abstemious. Probably the "garden" stands for Siena itself, which was fertile in such refinements of luxury.

130 The "band" (*brigata*) was a Sieneſe club, the members of which built a splendid palace, where they fared sumptuously every day, and exercised a stately hospitality towards illustrious visitors. Unhappily their finances were exhausted in ten months, and the club collapsed, not without epigrams as epitaphs. Caccia d' Ascian, of the house of Scialenghi, was one of the members of the club. The "dazed one" (Dante seems to take the proper name, *Abbagliato*, as descriptive) is said by some to have belonged to the house of Folcacchieri, probably because that name was common in it; others, however, identify him with Folgore di S. Gemignano, the poet of the club, who wrote verses in honour of Niccolò as its founder. He was not wealthy, and was admitted only as an amusing man of letters, a "good diner-out." Hence the point of the contrast between him and the others. They wasted their money, he his wits (*Scart*).

Then as Capocchio's shade shall I appear,  
 Who wrought false metals by my alchemy.  
 Thou must remember, if I see thee clear,  
 How I aped nature all too skilfully."

## CANTO XXX.

*The Tenth Bolgia—The Workers of Lies—Adam of Brescia—Sinon of Troy.*

WHEN Juno was enraged, in time of old,  
 With those of Thebes because of Semele,  
 As she had shown in fashion manifold,  
 So far strayed Athamas from sanity,  
 That as he saw his wife, with children twain 5  
 On either hand encumbered, thus cried he.  
 "Come, let us spread our nets, that we may gain  
 As prey the lion-whelps and lioness"  
 Then seizing one, Learchus, might and main,  
 He grasped him in his clutches pitiless, 10  
 And whirled and dashed him down upon a stone,  
 And she the other drowned in her distress,  
 Herself too with him, and when, all o'erthrown,  
 Was seen the pride of Trojans bold to dare,  
 So that the kingdom with its king was gone, 15  
 Then Hecuba, a captive, worn with care,  
 When she her own Polyxena saw dead,  
 And with the corpse of Polydorus there

<sup>136</sup> The archives of Siena record the execution of Capocchio in 1293. The *Anon Fior* reports that he excelled in every kind of imitation, both of persons and things, and finally took to alchemy. Line 138 implies that Dante had known him in the flesh, perhaps had for a time joined in his experiments.

<sup>1</sup> See Ovid, *Met.* iii. 253-315, iv. 416-562. The story runs thus: Semele, the daughter of Cadmus, was beloved by Jupiter, and Juno swore vengeance against her and her house, persuaded her to ask Jupiter to appear to her in his glory, so that she perished in her fear and wonder, and sent calamities on the other children of Cadmus. At her bidding the Erinyes brought madness on Athamas, king of Thebes, so that he took his wife Ino for a lioness, and his sons for her whelps, and then (*Met.* iv. 512-520) comes the passage which Dante paraphrases.

<sup>16</sup> Another reminiscence of Ovid (*Met.* xiii. 393-575), who paints the madness of Hecuba, the wife of Priam, wandering among the graves of her children after the fall of Troy, maddened with her many sorrows, herself a prisoner, her daughter Polyxena sacrificed at the tomb of Achilles (*Met.* xiii. 442-480), and Polydorus treacherously slain in Thrace, by his guardian Polymnestor (*Met.* xiii. 527-569, *Æn.* iii. 49-68).

On ocean's shore she met, and reason fled,  
 Wailing and sad, like dog she barked and bayed, 30  
 So far her mind by woe astray was led.  
 But not at Thebes or Troy the Furies made  
 Assault so fierce on any mortal wight,  
 Nor beasts—and much less men—so sorely frayed,  
 As I saw two pale shades in naked plight, 35  
 Who biting did their onward course pursue,  
 As doth the boar who from the sty takes flight.  
 One seized Capocchio, and his teeth thrust through  
 His neck i' the nape, and dragged him down away,  
 And on the rocky ground his belly drew ; 40  
 And the Aretine, who trembling still did stay,  
 Said, "Lo ! Gian Schicchi is that madman there,  
 And frenzied thus makes other souls his prey."  
 Then said I, "So may not that other tear  
 Thee with his teeth, grudge not, I thee entreat, 35  
 To say who 'tis before it disappear."  
 And he : "The ancient spirit thou dost meet  
 Of that accursed Myrrha, who became  
 Enamoured of her sire in ways unmeet ;  
 She to the deed of evil with him came 40  
 In likeness of another's form disguised,  
 E'en as that other yonder played his game  
 To win the lady of the stud so prized,  
 Buoso Donati's form assumed, and gave  
 To his last will its sanction legalised." 45  
 And when the two had passed who thus did rave,  
 On whom I fixed mine eye with gaze intent,  
 To other ill-starred souls my glance did wave ;

<sup>26</sup> The two forms that have brought these pictures of madness to his memory are Gianni Schicchi (l. 32) and Myrrha (l. 37), the guilt of personation being common to them both

<sup>27</sup> The Aretine is the Griffolino of C. xxix. 109.

<sup>28</sup> Gianni Schicchi belonged to the family of the Cavalcanti. The story, as told by the *Anon. Fior.*, was that Buoso Donati (C. xxv. 140) died without making a will, that his son or grandson, Simon, knowing Schicchi's power of personation, called him into his counsels, and that the latter, placed in the dead man's bed, dictated a will with many legacies to himself, leaving Simon as residuary legatee, to a notary who was summoned for the purpose before the death was known.

<sup>29</sup> The story of Myrrha, the daughter of Cinyras, king of Cyprus, which was after the pattern of that of Lot's daughters, is told by Ovid (*Mét.* x. 298-302). Adonis, the beloved of Venus, was the offspring of the incestuous union. In his epistle to Henry VII., Dante compares Florence, in her throwing herself into the Pope's arms, to the incestuous Myrrha.

I looked on one in form lute-fashion bent,  
     Had he but had his carcase lopped off there 50  
     Whence from the groin the forkèd limbs are sent,  
 The dropsy, that so gives unequal share  
     Of ill-attempered moisture to each part,  
     That face and belly ill-assorted are,  
 Constrained him so to keep his lips apart, 55  
     As doth the fevered man who, thirst-oppressed,  
     One towards the chin, and one above doth part.  
 "O ye who tread this world of ours unblest,  
     Though why I know not, free from penalty,"  
     Said he to us, "give heed to my request, 60  
 And look on Master Adam's misery.  
     Alive I had what fully met my will,  
     And now alas! for drop of water sigh.  
 The little streamlets that from each green hill  
     Of Casentino down to Arno go, 65  
     And form full many a cool and pleasant rill,  
 These not in vain around me ever flow,  
     For more that vision sets my soul athirst,  
     Than the foul ill that o'er my face works woe;  
 Stern justice, that repays my sin accurst, 70  
     The very place in which I sinned employs  
     To make me into sighs more frequent burst.  
 There is Romena, where with base alloys  
     I marred the coins the Baptist's head that bear,  
     For which I bore the fire that flesh destroys, 75

<sup>50</sup> The speaker is supposed to have heard the words spokeo by Virgil to Griffolino (C. xxix. 94).

<sup>61</sup> Master Adam of Brescia was employed by the Counts Guidi of Romena to forge Florentine money with three carats of alloy. As they were of full weight, the coins passed into general currency, but when the fraud was detected the criminal was seized by the Florentines and burnt alive on the road from Florence to Romena. The Alessandro named here is to be distinguished from his cousin of the same name, who, about 1305, was a leader of the Ghibelline exiles (*Faust* i p. 178, *Frat O M* iii p. 418).

<sup>62</sup> An obvious reproduction of *Luke* xvi. 23, 24. The special appropriateness here is that one of the chief symptoms of dropsy was, as Dante's medical studies may have taught him (see note on C. xxix. 47), an intolerable thirst, fit penalty for the unsatiable love of gain.

<sup>63</sup> The two main streams that flow into the Arno from the Casentino hills are the Sieve and the Chiana, and these in their turn are fed by innumerable rivulets. Romena, the scene of Master Adam's guilt, was a village on the slope of Casentino.

<sup>74</sup> The coins of Florence had on one side the head of the Baptist as the patron saint of the city, and on the other a lily (*fior*), whence the name "Borna."

But could I only see the sad soul here  
 Of Alessandro, Gnido, or their kin,  
 For that sight Branda's fount I well might spare  
 And one already suffers there within,  
 If the fierce shades that flit around speak true ; 80  
 But how can I my way thus limb-tied win ?  
 But were I once so lithe of limb anew  
 A single inch in fivescore years to move,  
 I would at once my course to him pursue,  
 And seek him where these dismal wretches rove, 85  
 Though full eleven miles they circle round,  
 And half a mile the road's wide, or above.  
 Through them among this evil crew I'm bound ,  
 They tempted me to coin the florins bright,  
 Wherein three carats of base dross were found." 90  
 And I : " Who are those twain in woful plight,  
 Who smoke like wetted hand in winter's rime,  
 And lie there near thee, close upon thy right ?"  
 " When I first fell," he said, " to this drear clime,  
 I found them here, and since they have not stirred, 95  
 Nor do I think they will through endless time.  
 One against Joseph spake her lying word,  
 The other Sinon, that false Greek of Troy ;  
 From their sharp fever all this reek is poured."  
 And one of them, as if in sore annoy, 100  
 Perhaps at mention as of evil fame,  
 Did on his belly's hide his fist employ,  
 And thence a sound, as from a tabret, came ;  
 And Master Adam smote him on the face  
 With arm whose strength seemed every whit the same, 106

<sup>77</sup> The three brothers were sons of Guido I, Count of Romagna, who was a cousin of the Guido Guerra of C. xvi 38

<sup>78</sup> Of the three fountains that bear the name of Branda, that of Siena, as the most famous, has commonly been identified with that of which the coner speaks. It seems proved, however, that there was a spring so named at Romagna, Master Adam's home, and if so, it is more probable that Dante would have put in a touch of local colour, like the previous mention of Casentino, than that he named a fountain more than sixty miles distant. See Forsyth's *Italy*, p. 116, *Amp* p. 269, *Bart* *in loc*

<sup>80</sup> Another local measurement, as in C. xxix. 9 (where see note), the circumference of the tenth Bolgia being half that of the ninth. Eleven miles gave the circuit of the Roman walls of Aurelian

<sup>97</sup> The companionship of Potiphar's wife (*Gen.* xxxix. 6-23) and Sinon, the lying instrument of the plot of the Trojan horse (*Æn.* ii. 57-194), is almost a typical instance of the confluence in Dante's mind of biblical and classical memories.

And said, "Though all my power to move one pace  
 These my swoln limbs a very nothing make,  
 My arm is free enough for such a case."  
 He answered: "When thou stoodest at the stake,  
 Thou hadst it not so nimble then to view; 110  
 But so, and more, when thou to coin didst take."  
 Then said the dropsied one, "Thou speakest true;  
 But thou gav'st no such truthful evidence  
 When thou at Troy wast asked the truth to show."  
 "If I spake false, thou didst false coin dispense," 115  
 Spake Sinon; "I stand here for one sole deed,  
 And thine are more than any fiend's immense."  
 "Remember, O thou perjured one, that steed,"  
 Spake he whose paunch so monstrously did swell,  
 "And fret that all the world that tale may read." 120  
 "Fret thou for tongue parched, thirst unquenchable,"  
 Then said the Greek, "and all the moisture vile,  
 Which in thy paunch before thine eyes doth dwell."  
 And then the corner: "Wide-oped to revile  
 Is still thy mouth, as 'twas its wont of old; 125  
 For if I thirst, and swoln with humours toil,  
 Thou hast the burning pain thy head doth hold.  
 To lap Narcissus' glass thou wouldst not need  
 With many words of prompting to be told."  
 Absorbed in listening to them I gave heed, 130  
 When he, my Master, said, "Nay, do but gaze,  
 A little more and I were wroth indeed."  
 And when I heard him thus in anger raise  
 His voice, I turned to him with shame so hot,  
 That even now it thrills my mind always; 135  
 And e'en as one who dreams of evil lot,  
 And in his dream that it were dream doth seek,  
 So that what is he craves as though 'twere not,

120 This "glass," or "mirror" of Narcissus, is, of course, as in the *speculum Diane*, applied to Lake Nemi, a periphrase for a clear crystalline lake or pool

131 The strange dialogue of sarcasms is apparently introduced, partly, perhaps, to bring out dramatically the received dogma of the schoolmen that the sufferings of the damned were aggravated by mutual revilings, partly also, if not chiefly, for the lesson with which it ends. The poet had known in others, perhaps in himself, the impulse which draws men to listen to a quarrel in which they have no concern. Foul words, hateful passions, have a fascination, such, e.g., as the realistic school of French novels or the police reports of a great crime have over their readers. He wishes, as from a personal experience, to protest against

So then was I, and lost my power to speak :  
 I sought excuse, and my excuse I found, 140  
 Yet knew it not in that confusion weak.  
 "Less shame would cleanse, though guilt did more abound,"  
 So said my Master, "than thy fault hath been ;  
 Cast then thy weight of sorrow to the ground.  
 Bethink thee well that I am near thee seen, 145  
 If e'er thy fortune thee again should place  
 Where such men rail in quarrel low and mean :  
 To wish to hear that marks a nature base."

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### CANTO XXXI.

*The Giants in the Darkness—Ephialtes—Antæus—Journey to the Abyss.*

THE self-same tongue whose edge first made me feel  
 Each flushing cheek to glow with crimson o'er,  
 Then brought its ministering balm to heal :  
 So have I heard the spear Achilles bore,  
 His father's erst, the cause was wont to be 5  
 Of pain at first and then of bounty more  
 We turned our back on ~~that vale sad to see,~~  
 Upon the bank that girds it all around,  
 And, as we onward went, no word spake we.  
 There less than night and less than day we found, 10  
 So that my forward vision had short course ;  
 But soon I heard a trump of shrillest sound,  
 It would have made all thunder-peals seem hoarse,  
 Which, as it tracked its pathway back again,  
 Drew my eyes' eager gaze to seek its source : 15

that fascination The higher human culture personified in Virgil and the illumined conscience alike forbid it In the confusion of shame, as in a nightmare dream of evil, he turns to his Master, and the shame is accepted as a sufficient token of contrition, and the history ends with the moral condensed into a maxim.

<sup>5</sup> Telephus, son of Hercules and king of Mysia, who was wounded by the spear of Achilles, was healed by a plaster made of the rust of the spear (Ovid, *Met.* xiii. 17). Other works of the same poet allude to the story (*Trist.* v. 2, *Rene Am.* 47).

<sup>9</sup> The silence is eminently characteristic. Common talk does not lightly follow on the intercourse between penitent and confessor

<sup>12</sup> The trump is that of the roar of Nimrod in his rage.





Nature, in truth, when she forsook the art  
 Of making creatures such as these, did well 80  
 To bid such ministers from Mars depart,  
 And if for elephants and whales that dwell  
 On earth she grieves not, to the thoughtful she  
 Will seem to act with juster, subtler spell;  
 For where the mind's clear faculty to see 85  
 With evil will and vigour doth combine,  
 No bulwark can from them a people free.  
 His face as long and vast as is the pine  
 That bears at Rome St Peter's name, appeared;  
 And other limbs were framed in fit design, 90  
 So that the bank which did as apron gird  
 His middle downwards, showed so much above,  
 That to reach up to either hair or beard,  
 Three Frisians would their vauntings idle prove,  
 For measured down I saw full thirty palm 95  
 From where a man to clasp his cloak doth love.  
 "Raphel, mai amech izabi a' alm,"  
 The haughty mouth began aloud to cry,  
 To which unmeet were any sweeter psalm.

80 The Biblical history of the giants of *Gen* vi 4 is not noticed by Dante. He confines himself entirely to those of classical mythology, in which they appeared as the Titans, sons of the Earth-Goddess, perhaps with a reminiscence of the "*Nec de te Natura, queror*," of *Lucan*, ix 855.

81 The poet's mind seems to have dwelt on the dread possibilities of war had such monsters continued to exist. Elephants and whales are big enough, but are not destructive, and therefore Nature continues to produce them without repenting of her work.

82 In the evil strength of the giants Dante sees the type of a yet greater evil. What nation could hold out against the combination of intellect and power in which there was no fear of God?

83 The history of the pine is curious enough. It is first known to have found a place in the mausoleum of Hadrian (i.e., the Castle of St Angelo). In 498 it was placed by Pope Symmachus on the top of a metal structure which he had erected over a fountain placed in the atrium of the Vatican by his predecessor Damasus (366). When the present St. Peter's was built, the bronze pine was removed to the Belvedere Garden. Its actual height is 6½ feet, and this would give about 54 feet for the height of the giants.

84 Dante may have seen Frieslanders either in the travels which took him to Cologne and Bruges or among the German troops of the Empire.

85 One notes, as before, the numerical preciseness. Thirty palms (there were, however, four kinds of palms in Italy) would give about 15 feet from the neck to the middle of the body.

86 It seems idle to seek for a meaning in what is intended to represent the confusion of Babel. Hebrew, Chaldee, Arabic, have, however, been "forced to bend," and volumes have been written by linguists with a zeal not according to knowledge. I refer readers to the elaborate *exorcism* in *Scarf*, and content myself with giving the three that come nearest to an intelligible meaning. (1) Flügel. "A pit has received my glory. See here my world." (2) Venturi. "By God, whither are they in this pit? Hide thyself." (3) Anon. "Let be, O God, why scatter my hosts in my own world?" It may be noted, however, that Manuel, the great Oriental scholar of the 14th century, was a friend of Dante's (*Scarf*), and that the scattered fragments of Semitic knowledge, and some faint echoes of Hebrew speech like this and *Par. vii. 1-3*, in the *Comm.*, may have been derived from him. *Comp. Witt D. F. u. 41*.

"O witless spirit, stull thy trumpet ply,"  
 Then said my Guide, "and show thy mind, with that,  
 When wrath or other passion thee doth try ;  
 Search round thy neck, and thou the band shalt find  
 Which keeps it fast, O blind soul and confused,  
 And see where it thy mighty breast doth bind." 75  
 Then said he, "By himself is he accused .  
 Nimrod is this, through whose intent of ill  
 One language in the world no more is used.  
 Let us leave him, nor speak all vainly still,  
 For every language to him, as his own 80  
 To others, is incomprehensible."  
 Then we in farther journey travelled on,  
 Turned to the left, and, bowshot's space within,  
 Another found, more fierce and overgrown.  
 Who to bind him such skill of art could win 85  
 I know not, but his right arm bound behind  
 He held, the other arm in front was seen ,  
 The chains, which downward hung, his limbs confined,  
 So from the neck down all the part exposed  
 That five full spirals round him were entwined. 90  
 "Thus haughty one to try his strength proposed,"  
 Then said my guide, "against almighty Jove,  
 And for requital he's in bonds enclosed ;  
 His name is Ephialtes ; he did prove  
 His might, when giants caused the gods to fear , 95  
 The arms then raised he never more may move "  
 Then I to him . "If possible it were,  
 I fain would wish Briareus, vast in size,  
 Before mine eyes might stand in vision clear."

<sup>80</sup> We are reminded of C. xv 12 What ministering workers had been employed by the Supreme Will ?

<sup>82</sup> "Almighty (*summo*) Jove" seems here to fall in with the classical mythology of the scene , but it must be remembered that in *Purg* vi 118 Dante applies the same epithet to the Crucified One. Possibly his knowledge of the Hebrew name, which we commonly write "Jehovah," may have facilitated the transfer

<sup>84</sup> Ephialtes, son of Neptune, one of the leaders of the revolt of the giants against Jupiter when they heaped Pelio upon Ossa. See *Hom. Il* v 385, *Od.* xi 304, *Hor Od* iii 2, 54, *Lucan*, iv 590-605

<sup>86</sup> Comp the description of Briareus of the hundred arms, son of Uranus and Terra, 10 *Æn.* v 564-567, and *Stat. Theb.* ii. 595, 596.

He answered : " Lo ! Antæus meets thine eyes 100  
 Hard by, for he can speak and is set free,  
 To bear us where the abyss of evil lies ;  
 Much farther on is he thou fain would'st see,  
 And he in manner like to this is bound,  
 Save that his looks show more ferocity." 105  
 Never was earthquake so tempestuous found  
 A tower with such great violence to shake,  
 As Ephialtes shook himself ; more ground  
 Had I than ever, fearing death, to quake ;  
 And nothing more was needed than this dread, 110  
 Had I not seen how bonds his strength did break.  
 Then onward farther were our footsteps led,  
 And to Antæus came, who full five ell  
 Rose from the pit, not counting in his head  
 " O thou, who in the fateful vale didst dwell 115  
 Which made of Scipio heir of glorious fame,  
 When Hannibal's great host before him fell,  
 And thousand lions as thy spoil didst claim,  
 And who, hadst thou been in the war of might  
 With those thy kin, some deem that through the same 120  
 Earth's sons had had the power to win the fight,  
 Take thou us down, nor grieve that task to ply,  
 Where, o'er Cocytus, cold asserts her right.  
 To Tityus, Typho bid us not to fly ;  
 This man can give what here your longings seek ; 125  
 Stoop down, nor curl thy lip so haughtily.

100 Antæus, son of Neptune and Terra, a giant with sixty arms, slain by Hercules (*Apollod.* ii 5, 11). He, born after the revolt, had not been one of the rebels against Jupiter (l. 120).

105 Lucan's *Bravvus ferax* (iv 556) was probably in Dante's mind.

115 The "ell," like the "palm" of l. 65, was a varying measure. Probably here we have that of Flanders, which was about four and a half feet. This would make Antæus about the same height as Nimrod.

116 A reminiscence of Lucan (iv 590-605), who describes the cave of Antæus as at Bagnara near Zama, which was the scene of Scipio's victory over Hannibal, and speaks of his banqueting on lions.

124 More classical reminiscences. For Tityus see *Æn.* vi. 594, Ovid., *Mét.* iv 457, Lucan l. c. For Typhæus, smitten with the thunderbolt of Jupiter and buried in Sicily (*Pers.* viii. 70; Ovid., *Mét.* v 348), near Pelorus.

125 Even the giants are represented as still caring for fame. Dante, conscious of his own power, promises, through Virgil, that he will make the name of Antæus more widely known than Ovid or Lucan had done. Comp. C vi. 89, xiii. 75, xv 119. In C xxxii. 94 we shall find those in whom the desire is quenched and who would fain be forgotten.

He in the world can yet thy glory speak,  
 For he still lives, and hopes for length of days,  
 Unless God's grace his life shall sooner take."  
 So spake the Master. Nor made he delays, 130  
 But with the hand he did my Leader grasp  
 That once filled Hercules with sore amaze.  
 And Virgil, when he felt the giant's clasp,  
 Said to me, "Come thou near, that I take thee,"  
 And then himself and me in one did hasp. 135  
 And as to eyes that Carisenda see,  
 Beneath its sloping tower, when comes a cloud,  
 It seems to bend with motion contrary,  
 So did Antæus seem to me, who, bowed  
 In eager gaze, did look to see him bend, 140  
 And half to go by other way had vowed.  
 But in the pit full swift our course did end  
 Which Lucifer with Judas doth devour,  
 Nor paused he, thus bowed down, to reascend,  
 But rose, as mast in gallant ship doth tower. 145

### CANTO XXXII.

*The Tenth Circle—The Lake of Ice—Caïna—Traitors to their Kin—Antenora  
 —Traitors to their Country.*

If I had rhymes as out of tune and harsh  
 As would be fitting for that drear abyss,  
 Which, as their centre, th' other rocks o'erarch,  
 To press thought's grape-juice I were not remiss  
 More fully Since by me they're not possessed, 5  
 Not without fear I come to speak of this

135 The Carisenda, or Garisenda (so called from the name of its builders) is the leaning tower of Bologna. As it was partly destroyed by Giovanni Visconti in 1355 (hence its later name of *Torre mozza*), it was probably much higher when Dante used to stand and watch the motion of the clouds as they passed over it.

145 The simile is reproduced by Milton (*P' L* 1 29.).

2 The last, the frozen deep of Hell, is divided into four concentric circles—Caïna, for the traitors against their kindred (l. 16-72), Antenora, for those against their country (l. 73), Ptolomea, for those against their friends (C xxxii 91-137), Giudecca, for those against their benefactors. The hardness and coldness which is the ultimate doom of this, the most malignant form of evil, is gradually intensified as the traitors sink lower into the ice.

No theme it is for one to touch in jest,  
 To paint the abyss of all the universe,  
 Nor speech that "Mamma," "Babbo" shall suggest ;  
 But may those Ladies now assist my verse, 10  
 Who helped, of yore, Amphion Thebes to rear,  
 That speech and fact may not be too diverse !  
 O race above all others cursèd there,  
 Dwelling in clime whereof 'tis hard to tell,  
 Better on earth ye sheep or wild-goats were ! 15  
 When we had reached the deep and darksome well,  
 Beneath the giant's feet, but far more low,  
 While still my gaze upon the high wall fell,  
 I heard a voice, "Take heed how thou dost go !"  
 Look to it, lest beneath thy feet thou tread 20  
 The heads of brothers worn and spent with woe."  
 Turned I thereon, and saw before me spread,  
 And at my feet, a lake exceeding cold,  
 And glass, not water, seemed there in its bed.  
 Never did voil so thick the course enfold 25  
 In winter-time of Austrian Donau's track,  
 Nor doth so chilly clime the Tanais hold  
 As it was there, for should the Tambernach  
 Fall on it, or Pietra Pana's rock,  
 E'en on the edge it had not made a crack. 30  
 And as the frogs to croak are wont to flock,  
 With snout thrust forth from water, when in dreams  
 The peasant maiden gleams from every shock,

<sup>8</sup> As the earth was, in the Ptolemaic system, the centre round which all other spheres revolved, its centre was that of the whole universe

<sup>9</sup> The two words (*Babbo* = Papa) occur in *V. E.* II. 7, as belonging to the style which is below the dignity of poetry. Here, perhaps, it is used for the Italian, in which Dante wrote, and which he describes in his *Ep. to Can. Grande* as "*humilis et romanesco*," the common speech of "*muliercula*." He would want, he seems to say, with a real or affected modesty, some other language, the Latin, e.g., of Virgil, to do justice to the scene that now met his gaze

<sup>11</sup> The story of Amphion was probably known to Dante through Horace, *A. P.* I. 394. The "ladies" are, of course, the Muses, who gave him the gifts of music and of song

<sup>12</sup> The lake is that of Cocytus, the pool of wailing. *Comp. C.* XIV. 103-120

<sup>13</sup> The descriptions may, as in other instances (*C.* IX. 112, XI. 4, XX. 68), come in part from personal knowledge, or from what had been reported by travellers. I have used Milton's *Donau* for the more modern Danube. The Tanais is the Don, which flows into the sea of Azov. Tambernach has been identified with Tovarnich in Slavonia, or Javoruck near Adelsberg in Carniola. Pietra-pana is a mountain between Modena and Lucca. One of the embassies traditionally assigned to Dante was to the king of Hungary

<sup>14</sup> If rhymes suggested thoughts, one must admit that they could scarcely have suggested a more graceful periphrase for summer than that which here meets us.

Those hapless ghosts showed in that frozen stream,  
 Lavid as far as part where shame is shown, 35  
 And gnashing teeth did like storks' clattering seem.  
 Of each the glance was ever downwards thrown,  
 From out their mouth the cold, and from the face  
 Their sorrowing heart, were all too plainly known.  
 When I around had gazed a little space, 40  
 I turned my glance towards my feet, and there  
 Saw two so close their locks did interlace.  
 "Tell me, O ye whose breasts are strained so near,"  
 Said I, "who are ye?" And their necks they bent,  
 And when to me their faces they did rear, 45  
 Their eyes, which erst within had tears deep pent,  
 Gushed downwards through the lids, and then the cold  
 Congealed the tears and stayed their free descent.  
 Never did rivet beam to beam so hold  
 Thus strongly, whereon they, like goats that fight, 50  
 Butted, so fierce a rage their hearts controlled,  
 And one, who had both ears lost through the might  
 Of that sharp frost, with visage downward bent,  
 Said, "Why on us dost mirror thus thy sight?  
 If thou to know these twain art so intent, 55  
 The valley whence Bisenzio downward pours,  
 To them, as to their father Albert, went;  
 Both from one womb did issue, and the shores  
 Of all Cana thou may'st search, nor find  
 Spirit more worthy of these frozen floors, 60  
 Not he whose breast and shadow, as combined,  
 Were with one stroke transfixed by Arthur's hand,  
 Nor yet Focaccia, nor yet he behind

<sup>53</sup> There is, perhaps, a latent symbolism. Those who yield to hatred lose the power of listening to the voice of reason or conscience.

<sup>57</sup> The two traitors are Napoleon and Alessandro of the Alberti family, lords of Falterona. They quarrelled about the possession of a tower in the valley of the Bisenzio, a tributary of the Arno, plotted against each other, and died by each other's hands.

<sup>61</sup> The traitor is Mordred, the son of Arthur, who rebelled against his father and was slain by him (*Morte d'Arthur*, B. XXI., c. 4, ed. 1868). The sword, in common phrase, 'let day-light through him.'

<sup>63</sup> The name of Focaccia carries us to the starting-point of the Bianchi and Neri parties. He belonged to the family of the "White" Cancellieri. In one narrative he is said to have assassinated his cousin Simbaldo, of the "Black" section, in revenge for the murder of his friend Bertino, in another, to have murdered a boy, also a cousin, who had insulted his father, but had been dismissed by him without punishment. The outrage raised a *vendetta* in Pistoia, and this spread to Florence (Benvenuto Rambaldi in *Scart. & ill.* viii. 38).

Whose head, that shuts out all my view, I stand,  
 And Sassol Mascheroni was his name ; 65  
 Thou know'st his tale if thou'rt from Tuscan land ,  
 And lest my over-prolix speech thou blame,  
 Camicion de' Pazzi in me know ;  
 I wait Carlino, who shall clear my fame."  
 And then I saw a thousand faces low, 70  
 Livid with cold, whence o'er me shudderings creep,  
 And ever will, from all pools frozen so.  
 And as we went toward the centre deep,  
 To which converges all we know of weight,  
 I shivered where the eternal shadows sleep. 75  
 Whether 'twere will, or fortune's chance, or fate,  
 I know not, but as o'er the heads I went,  
 My foot upon the face of one did grate.  
 Wailing he cried, " Why dost thou me torment ?  
 Unless thou comest to increase the hate 80  
 Of Montaperti, why my pain augment ?"  
 And I " O Master, here, I pray thee, wait,  
 That I from out my doubt may find a way ;  
 Then, as thou wilt, my haste shall not abate "  
 My Guide then stopped , and I to him did say, 85  
 Who still was raving fierce with blasphemy,  
 " Who art thou that at others rail'st away ?"  
 " Nay, who art thou that thus," he made reply,  
 " Through Antenóra, smiting cheeks, dost go ?  
 Wert thou alive, 'twere done too heavily " 90

<sup>66</sup> Sassol Mascheroni of Florence murdered the only son of an uncle that he might succeed to his estate. He was put to death by being rolled to and fro in a cask with spikes inside, after the manner of Regulus. The crime and punishment were the talk of all Tuscany. Hence l. 66.

<sup>67</sup> Alberto Camicione de' Pazzi, a family in Valdarno, murdered an uncle or cousin Carlino, of the same family, in 1302 betrayed the castle of Piantrevigne in Valdarno to the Neri for money, and afterwards resold it to the Bianchi. His greater guilt is to make that of his brother seem small.

<sup>70</sup> Caina is left, and the pilgrims enter Antenóra, so called from the traitor through whom the Greeks took Troy.

<sup>71</sup> As in l. 8, the earth's centre is the centre of gravity for the whole universe. Here there is perhaps the symbol of the thought that all sins tend downward to that abyss.

<sup>81</sup> For Montaperti, see C. x. 86. The speaker is Bocca degli Abati, who traitorously cut off the hand of Jacopo de' Pazzi at the battle of Montaperti (C. x. 86), and thus contributed to the defeat of the Guelphs.

<sup>89</sup> The word "Antenóra," as applied to the circle of traitors to their country, indirectly shows how little Dante knew of Homer. In the *Iliad* (iii. 148, vii. 345) Antenor appears as a wise counsellor who urged the Trojans to give up Helen. Dante follows a later tradition (*Serv. ad Æn.* i. 242), which makes him give up the Palladium to the Greeks and open the door of the fatal horse. See also *Cant.* xx.



"Alive I am," I answered him, "and so  
 May it please thee, if thou to fame aspire,  
 That I thy name in other rhymes may show."  
 And he "Full otherwise is my desire;  
 Take thy way hence, nor longer vex my soul; 95  
 In this dark vale thy flattery doth but tire."  
 Then I put forth my hand and seized his poll,  
 And said, "Now thou thy name must needs confess,  
 Or not a single hair will I leave whole."  
 And he "Though thou should'st pluck each single tress, 100  
 I will not show thee who I am, nor tell,  
 Though thousand times thy weight my head should press"  
 His locks already I had grasped full well,  
 And more than one good handful I had torn,  
 While he howled on, with eyes that downward fell, 105  
 When one, "What ails thee, Bocca?" cried in scorn,  
 "Is't not enough thy jaws our ears should tire,  
 But thou must howl? What devil makes thee mourn?"  
 "No words of thine," I said, "do I desire,  
 Thou catiff traitor, for, to thy foul shame, 110  
 True news of thee shall men from me acquire"  
 "Away," he answered, "what thou wilt, proclaim,  
 But shroud not him, if thou return above,  
 Whose tongue was now too prompt to tell my name.  
 The silver of the French his tears doth move, 115  
 'I saw him of Duera,' thou may'st say,  
 'Where guilty souls their icy torments prove.'  
 If thou art asked what others there did stay,  
 He of Beccaria standeth at thy side,  
 Whose gorget fine our Florence cut away, 120

94 We note the pregnant force of the contrast to what has hitherto been the law of man's nature, even among the lost. The love of fame, the desire to be talked of among men, survives in all the others. The traitors to their country desire eternal oblivion.

103 The pitiless cruelty of the act which Dante invents, as it were, for his own glory is another note of his abhorrence of treachery as the deadliest of all crimes. See note on C. xxxiii. 117.

116 The treachery of Buoso da Duera of Cremona may be briefly told. Manfred, son of Frederick II., had given him money to stop the passage of the French army which Guy de Montfort was leading against him. He took the money and did nothing with it, took money also from the French and made no resistance (*Vill. vii. 4*, *Malisp.* c. 185). To a Ghibelline who, like Dante, saw in the success of Charles of Anjou the beginning of all evils for Italy, that act of treachery would seem especially hateful. Comp. *Kingst.* ii. 445.

119 Tesaurus di Beccheria of Pavia was Abbot of Vallombrosa and Legate of Alexander IV.

Gianni del Soldanier doth abide  
 With Ganellon and Tebaldell', I trow,  
 Who, while Faenza slept, her gates oped wide."  
 Already we had left him, and withdrew,  
 When in one pit I saw two frozen thrust, 125  
 So that one head as hood to th' other grew ;  
 And, as a famished man devours a crust,  
 So there the topmost one his teeth set fast,  
 Where skull with neck the juncture doth adjust,  
 Not otherwise did Tydeus make repast 130  
 Of Menalippus's skull in his disdain,  
 Than he on scalp and what it held broke fast.  
 "O thou whose hate in bestial sign is plain,  
 Thy hate for him whom thou dost thus devour,  
 Do thou, these terms agreed, the 'why' explain ; 135  
 That if of right thy rage on him doth pour,  
 I, knowing who ye are and what his sin,  
 May pay thee when I reach the world once more,  
 Unless my tongue be stiff my lips within."

After the expulsion of the Ghibellines in 1258, he was accused by the Guelph party, then in power, of having plotted with them against Florence, was tortured till he confessed his guilt, and then beheaded. The Pope avenged him by an interdict (*I'll.* vi. 65, *Malisp.* c. 160). Dante seems to put the Ghibelline traitor side by side with Buoso, as if to show that he is no respecter of persons, of whatever party.

121 The Soldanier family belonged to the Ghibelline noblesse of Florence, but Gianni was a traitor to the cause. After the defeat of Manfred at Benevento (1266), when Guido Novello led his Ghibelline forces out of Florence, Gianni made himself master of the city, and used his power for his own advantage only.

122 In Ganellone we pass from recent history to distant romance. He appears in the Charlemagne myths as the traitor who caused the great rout of Roncesvalles (C. xxxi. 16). Tebaldello dei Zambrai of Faenza betrayed his city to the Bolognese, Ravennese, and others, who were besieging it under orders from Martin IV (1281), by sending him a cast of the lock of the city gates, which enabled them to make a key that opened it (*Mural.* xiv. 1105; *Vill.* vii. 80).

125 The position of the two as not on the same level seems to indicate that we are on the point of passing from Antenor to Priam (C. xxxiii. 124). Ugolino was a traitor to his country, Ruggieri to his friend.

126 The whole picture is reproduced from Stat. *Theb.* viii. 740-767, ll. 1-20. Tydeus was one of the Seven against Thebes, a Theban whom he had killed, and whose head he outraged with the brute hatred here described.

128 The payment is found (1) in the narrative which has immortalised Ugolino's name, (2) perhaps also in the doubt of C. xxxiii. 86 as to his guilt.

## CANTO XXXIII.

*Ugolino and Ruggieri—Ptolomæa—Traitors to their Friends—Alderigo*

His mouth that sinner from his fierce repast  
 Uplifted then, and wiped it on the hair  
 Of that same head that he behind laid waste,  
 And then began . " Anew thou bidd'st me bear  
 The desperate sorrows on my heart that weigh, 5  
 Even in thought, while I from speech forbear ,  
 But, if my words as seed their part shall play  
 To bear the fruit of shame to him I eat,  
 My tears and words shall mingled find their way  
 I know not who thou art, nor how thy feet 10  
 Are led below, but, as thy speech I hear,  
 Thou seem'st to me a Florentine complete.  
 Know then thou see'st Count Ugolino here,  
 And this the Archbishop Ruggieri is ,  
 Now list why such a neighbour I appear 15

<sup>1</sup> An echo from Iocasta's description of Erichtho, "*Hæc ubi fata, caput, spiritumque ora letavit* (vi 719) as l 4 is of the "*infandum, regina, jubes renovare dolorem* (Æn ii 3)

<sup>7</sup> The words form a parallel to those in the story of Francesca, "*Faro come colui che piange e dice* (C v 126), of which the narrative that follows is, in some sense, the counter part

<sup>11</sup> Linguistic commentators point to the fact that the speech of Dante in C xxxii 133-139 contains in the original not less than seven words which distinctly belong to the dialect of Florence

<sup>18</sup> Pisa was conspicuously Ghibelline in its politics, and in 1274 it expelled the Visconti and Gherardeschi who were Guelphs, to the latter of which families Ugolino belonged. They allied themselves with the other Guelphs of Tuscany and attacked Pisa, and succeeded in securing their recall. Ugolino became master of the situation, and in 1282 was chosen captain of the people in a war against Genoa, in which the Pisans were defeated with great loss at the battle of Meloria, and this was followed by a general league of the Guelph cities against them. Ugolino met the crisis by ceding several fortresses to Florence and expelling the Ghibellines. The way now seemed open to making himself lord of Pisa, but he was thwarted by a nephew, Anselm di Capraia, of whom he got rid by poison. Another rival appeared in the person of his grandson, Nino, judge of Gallura in Sardinia (*Purg* viii 53). The Ghibellines finding the Guelphs thus divided, placed themselves under the lead of Ruggieri degli Ubaldini, Archbishop of Pisa. Nino and Ugolino joined hands under the pressure of the common danger, but fresh jealousies sprung up which led Ugolino to a new coalition with Ruggieri. The former retired to a castle in the neighbourhood, the latter was driven out of Pisa. Ugolino returned to Pisa and celebrated his triumph by a grand banquet, the mirth of which was darkened by the words of a court fool, who being asked what he thought of it all, answered that "The giver of the feast seemed to him nearer than any man in Italy to a great disaster. The disaster came through the treachery of the Archbishop, who turned the tide of popular feeling against Ugolino, and had him imprisoned on a charge of treason, with two sons and two grandsons, in a tower on the Piazza degli Anziani (July 1288). Florence

That I by work of evil thoughts of his,  
 Trusting to him, was first a prisoner made,  
 And after killed, no need to tell thee this ;  
 But what before thee cannot have been laid,  
 That is, how sharp and dread my death has been, 20  
 Thou now shalt hear ; then let my wrongs be weighed.  
 A little window, that hawk's-cage within,  
 Which now through me as Hunger's Tower is known  
 (And others too its gates shall enter in),  
 Through its small aperture to me had shown 25  
 Full many a moon, when I dreamt ill dream true,  
 In which the future's veil aside was thrown.  
 I saw this lord and chief his prey pursue,  
 Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs on the hill  
 Which hideth Lucca from the Pisans' view, 30  
 With hungry hounds well-trained, of eager will :  
 Guarlandi and Lanfranchi and Sismond'  
 He had there set the foremost place to fill.  
 A little while, and sire and sons were found,  
 So seemed it, wearied out ; fangs sharp and dread 35  
 Upon their flanks made many a horrid wound.

rallied to the defence of its Guelph ally against the Pisan Ghibellines, and they put themselves under the command of Guido da Montefeltro (C. xxvii. 67), who arrived in Pisa in March 1289. The Pisans then took the resolve which issued in the tragedy of which Dante tells. The key, of the tower were thrown into the Arno, and the prisoners were left to starve to death (*Pauv.* i. 491-503, *Vill.* vii. 121).

19 As to the story of Francesca, Dante fixes precisely on the points in the tragedy which no one knew or could know, and evolves what must have been, from the depths of his own imagination.

22 "Hawk's cage," Ital. *muda* = mews, in the old sense of the word, as the place in which hawks, eagles, &c. were kept during their moulting or "mewing" season. The tower may have been used for that purpose, but is said to have been known as the Torre de' Gualandi till after the tragedy, when it gained the new name of *Torre della Fame*. It has been since destroyed.

24 The "others" may refer to the fact that a grandson of Ugolino's, who had been rescued by his nurse and taken to Lucca, came to Pisa when he had grown to manhood, and said that he wished to share the doom of his family. The Pisans imprisoned him in the tower, but allowed his nurse to attend him, and both were liberated by Charles IV. (see *Philoth.*), or, according to another tradition, Henry VII. of Luxembourg (*Scart.*)

26 The imprisonment, as shown above, had lasted eight months. The *v. l. lume for lune* is obviously inadmissible.

28 The Italian "*maestro e donno*" may perhaps convey a sarcastic reference to *John xiii.* 13. Extremest unlikeness was emphasised by using the words that described the True Shepherd.

31 The dream is haunted as by memories of treachery. On that mountain ridge (Monte San Giuliano) stood most of the fortresses which Ugolino was charged with having surrendered to the Lucchese. He is, as it were, the wolf the hunters are pursuing, and his children are the cubs. The three houses of l. 35 are those of Pisan Ghibellines who were supporters of Ruggieri.

When I awoke, ere yet the night had fled,  
 Still in their sleep I heard my children wail,  
 Who there were with me, crying out for bread.  
 Full hard art thou, if grief shall not prevail 40  
 To touch thee, thinking what my heart did cry ;  
 When canst thou weep, if now to weep thou fail ?  
 Already they had waked ; the hour drew nigh  
 Till which they had been wont for food to wait,  
 And each one's dream brought sore perplexity. 45  
 I heard the locking of the lower gate  
 Of that dread tower, and then awhile I stared  
 In my sons' faces, speechless, desolate.  
 I wept not, all within as stone grew hard.  
 They wept, and then my Anselmuccio said, 50  
 ' What ails thee, father ? Why this fixed regard ? '  
 And still I shed no tear, nor answer made  
 All that long day, nor yet the following night,  
 Till the next sun was o'er the world displayed ,  
 And when there came a little ray of light 55  
 Into the dolorous prison, and I knew  
 My own face by four faces' piteous plight ;  
 Then both my hands in anguish I gnawed through.  
 And they, who deemed that hunger did constrain  
 To eat, rose up with one accord to sue, 60  
 And said, ' O father, less will be our pain  
 If thou eat us , thou didst these frames array  
 With this poor flesh, now strip it off again.'  
 I calmed me then their anguish to allay ;  
 That day, and then the next, we all were dumb 65  
 Hard earth, why opened not thy depths that day ? "

<sup>37</sup> The time is mentioned in connection with the prevailing belief as to the truth of morning dreams (C. xxvi. 7).

<sup>38</sup> As stated above, there were two sons, Gaddo and Uguccione, two grandsons, Nino, surnamed Brigata, son of Count Guelfo, and Anselmuccio, son of Count Lotto (*Murat* vi 595). Many historians, however, including a chronicle of Pisa (*Murat* xv 579), speak, as Dante does, of four

<sup>39</sup> Did *Lam* iv 4 float before the memory of the student of Jeremiah ? (C. i 39). Here there is the added misery that the children cry for bread even in their sleep, as in l 45 they dream of starvation, and when they wake, each tells the special form which the horror had assumed. And in the midst of this there came the sound which told them that all hope was gone. So passed a day and night, and then the father saw the fierce rage of hunger in his children's faces, and knew that his own was growing to be like theirs.

<sup>40</sup> The thought is common enough in the conscious or unconscious poetry of all ages, but with Dante there may have been a distinct echo of *Æn.* x 673, xii 681.

And when unto the fourth day we had come,  
 Gaddo lay stretched before my feet, and cried,  
 'Why, father, help'st thou not?' and there, in sum,  
 He died; and as thou see'st me, so I eyed 70  
 The three fall down, and perish one by one,  
 The fifth day and the sixth, and then I tried,  
 Already blind, to grope o'er them alone,  
 And three days called them after they were dead,  
 Then even grief by hunger was outdone." 75  
 Then, with his eyes askance, as this he said,  
 On that poor skull he gripped his teeth full well,  
 Which, like a dog's, upon the bare bone fed.  
 Ah Pisa! shame and blot of all that dwell  
 In that fair country where the *St* doth sound; 80  
 Since neighbour states work not their vengeance fell,  
 Let Caprai' and Gorgona shift their ground,  
 And make a dam for Arno's issuing tide,  
 So that each living soul in thee be drowned!  
 For e'en if Ugolino rumour wide 85  
 Did charge with guilt of citadels betrayed,  
 Not by such torture should his sons have died,

<sup>69</sup> Gaddo, the elder of the two sons

<sup>73</sup> Here again we hesitate between seeing in the words the originating touch of the supreme artist, or an echo of the words in which Ovid (*Met* vi 277) describes the grief of Niobe—

*"Corporibus gelidis incumbit, et ordine nullo  
 Oscula dispensat natos suprema per omnes"*

<sup>75</sup> What has been called the "teknophagy of Ugolino" has become one of the burning questions of Dante's commentators, and volumes have been written on it. The main argument on the negative side is a scream of horror. It was too horrible for poetry, too sickening for human nature to endure. To this there seems a sufficient answer in the facts (1) that Dante shrinks from no horror, and fathoms the very depths of human misery, (2) that like horrors have been enacted of old in the history of beleaguered cities (*Dent* xxviii 56, 57, 2 *Kings* vi 28), and that our own time has not been without a proof that cannibalism is possible even among civilised and Christian men, (3) that the suggestive reticence has a distinct parallel in that of C v 138, (4) that the description of C xxxii 125 apparently indicates such an act. On the other hand, Dante's words do not necessarily mean more than that Ugolino died not of grief, but of starvation. The paraphrase of the whole story in Chaucer's *Monk's Tale* shows how that passage of the *Inferno* had impressed itself on the minds of Europe. Michael Angelo and Sir Joshua Reynolds have made it memorable in art.

<sup>76</sup> Compare the parallel imprecation on Pistoia, C xxv 10-12

<sup>80</sup> Italy, as the land where *si* stood for "yes," as *se* did in the S.W. of France (Languedoc), and *oil* or *oui* in Northern France (*V E* i 10). The "neighbour states" were Lucca and Florence. Historians, however, saw in the disasters which fell on Pisa at the hands of Florence and Genoa the due punishment of its guilt (*Vill* vii. 128).

<sup>82</sup> Capraia and Gorgona are two islands near the mouth of the Arno, which, seen from Pisa, seem also to close it up. Dante's wish is that they would actually form a dam, so that the river might drown the city with its pent-up waters.

<sup>86</sup> In placing Ugolino in Antenor's, Dante seems to affirm the charge. Here he speaks as if it were more or less doubtful. Three castles were said to have been betrayed to the Florentine, four to the Lucchesi (*Nap* i. 313).

Guiltless of crime their tender age them made,  
 (O thou new Thebes!), Brigat', Uguccion,  
 And those whose names my song above hath said. 90  
 Then by the frozen pool our steps passed on,  
 Where it binds fast another people yet,  
 Not downward bent, but upward turned each one.  
 Weeping itself makes them to weep forget,  
 And grief, which finds a barrier in their eyes, 95  
 Is turned within new anguish to beget,  
 For the first tears that flow grow cluster-wise,  
 And, like a vizor all of crystal made,  
 Fill all the socket whence the eyebrows rise,  
 And though, with horny numbness overlaid, 100  
 Through the sharp cold, the very nerves of sense  
 Seemed all from out my countenance to fade,  
 Yet thought I that I felt a wind somewhence.  
 So I: "O Master, who this air doth move!  
 Are not all vapours banished far from hence?" 105  
 Then he to me: "Full soon thine eye shall prove,  
 Thyself being there, the very answer true,  
 Beholding what this wind doth stir above."  
 And one of that ice-bound and wretched crew  
 Cried to us: "O ye spirits harsh and proud, 110  
 So that the lowest place is given to you,  
 Lift for me from mine eyes this icy cloud.  
 A moment let my burdened heart find vent,  
 Before my tears renew their frozen shroud."  
 Then I: "If thou upon my help art bent, 115  
 Say who thou art, unless I free thine eye,  
 May I go down this ice-pool's deep descent!"

<sup>88</sup> Adolescence, the "tender age" of man's life, is reckoned in the *Conv* iv 24 as extending to the twenty fifth year. Chaucer (*U c*) makes the *eldest* of the *three* children scarcely five, but this has no foundation, and is at variance with history.

<sup>89</sup> The parallel is found in the cruelty with which Thebes treated the children of Cadmus. From Antenor we pass to Ptolemaea, where the souls are plunged deeper in the frozen pool, their faces just seen turned upwards.

<sup>97</sup> The blindness of the ice-closed eyes is obviously the symbol of the induration of feeling and of conscience which the traitor's act brings with it as its natural consequence, and therefore its punishment.

<sup>105</sup> The icy blast, which the student of Nature cannot explain on any theory of evaporation, comes, as is told in *C xxxiv* 51, from the wings of Lucifer.

<sup>113</sup> Lying men, even the souls of the lost (*C v* 140), know the relief of tears. The crowning misery of the traitors against friends is that that relief is denied them.

<sup>117</sup> One notes the deliberate equivocation which finds its outcome in l 149. We may perhaps, as in *C xxxii* 203, draw the lesson, not contemplated by the poet, that there is a danger lest what seems a righteous indignation against evil—the "doing well to be angry"—

Then he replied: "Fra Alberigo I,  
 Known by the fruits in evil garden bred,  
 Now date for fig is paid me where I lie." 120  
 "Oh!" said I to him, "now art thou too dead!"  
 And he to me: "How my poor carcase fares  
 Up in the world, all knowledge now hath fled.  
 This privilege our Ptolomæa bears,  
 That oftentimes the spirit falls below, 125  
 Ere Atropos hath plied her fatal shears.  
 And that thou may'st more willingly bid flow  
 The frozen tears, and scrape them from my face,  
 Learn that as soon as men deal treacherous blow,  
 As I have done, their frame is seized apace 130  
 By demon's power, who henceforth it doth guide,  
 Till life has measured its appointed space.  
 To such a pit as this it then doth glide;  
 And so, perchance, his body still is seen  
 Above, whose soul is freezing at my side. 135  
 This, if thou'rt just come down, thou know'st, I ween,  
 Ser Branca d'Oria he, and many a year  
 Has passed since he a prisoner here hath been."  
 "I trow," said I, "that thou deceiv'st me here,  
 For Branca d'Oria is as yet not dead; 140  
 He eats and drinks and sleeps and clothes doth wear."

should lead us on to an evil like in kind to that which we condemn. Men may become false through their scorn of falsehood, cruel in their hatred of cruelty.

<sup>118</sup> Fra Alberigo, of the house of the Manfredi of Faenza, entered the Order of the Knights Joyous (C. xxiii. 103). His cousin Manfred had struck him in a quarrel. He hid his rage at the time, pretended to forgive, and invited Manfred to a feast. When the meal was over, he cried with a loud voice, "Now for the fruit" (*Veniens fructus*), and armed men came from behind a screen and murdered Manfred and one of his sons (*Vill. x. 27*). Hence the proverb, "the fruit of Fra Alberigo," for a treacherous revenge (*Pulci Morg. Macg. c. 25*). In l. 120 we have another proverbial equivalent of "measure for measure" in a form specially appropriate. See *Pas. iv. 19*.

<sup>121</sup> Manfred was slain in 1295, Alberigo was still living in 1300. Hence Dante's wonder.

<sup>123</sup> The ignorance of the lost as to what is passing in the world extends even to the state of the body which Alberigo had left behind him.

<sup>124</sup> The name is probably connected with the Ptolemy who treacherously murdered Simon, the father of Judas Macabæus, and his sons (1 *Macc. xvi. 11-16*), rather than with the king of Egypt who slew Pompeius.

<sup>126</sup> Of the three Parcae or Fates of classical mythology, Atropos was she who with her shears cut the thread of life which her sisters spun.

<sup>130</sup> The thought is probably evolved from *John xxi. 27*, and may have seemed an explanation of the absolutely fiendish malignity to be seen in extreme developments of evil.

<sup>137</sup> As in l. 122, the question whether the body still lives on earth is one which the lost soul cannot answer. What he does know is that the real Branca d'Oria is at his side. The treachery referred to was Branca's murder of his father-in-law, Michael Zanche (C. xxii. 28), in order that he might get possession of his post at Logodoro. Branca d'Oria was alive in 1311 (*Dino c. iii. App. Murat. ix. 528*), so that Dante's reproach was aimed at a man living when he wrote, perhaps even when he published, his poem. The "kinsman" was a nephew who was an accomplice in the murder.



"In most above of Malebranche dread,"  
 Said he, "where clammy pitch doth boil alway,  
 Not yet had Michael Zanche shown his head,  
 When this man in his place left fiend to stay 145  
 In his own body, and a kinsman's too,  
 Who with him chose the traitor's part to play.  
 But hither stretch thine hand to me who sue;  
 Open mine eyes " And I—I oped them not,  
 For to cheat him was chivalrous and true. 150  
 Ha' ha' ye Genoese, ye strange bad lot,  
 Ill-mannered, full of every purpose vile,  
 Why doth the world not cast you out to rot?  
 For with Romagna's soul most steeped in guile,  
 One of yourselves, yea, such an one I found, 155  
 Whose soul now in Cocytus bathes, the while  
 He seems in flesh to live above the ground.

### CANTO XXXIV.

*The Giudecca—Traitors to their Lords—Lucifer—Judas—Brutus—Cassius—  
 The Stars seen again*

" *Vexilla Regis prodeunt*, those of Hell  
 Now meet us, wherefore look in front of thee,"  
 My Master said, "if thou canst see him well "  
 As when a thick cloud floats on heavily,  
 Or when our hemisphere is wrapt in night, 5  
 A mill with wind-tossed sails far off we see,  
 So now methought like structure came to light.  
 Then from the gale I shelter sought behind  
 My Guide, for other screen was none in sight.

<sup>150</sup> See note on l. 117

<sup>151</sup> There is no reason to think that Genoa was worse than other Italian cities, but its annals, like theirs, presented a sufficient calendar of crimes of perfidy and cruelty to justify Dante's condemnation (*Murat* vi. 106). Possibly the poet was influenced by Virgil's words as to the Ligurian character, "*Consilio versare dolos ingressus et astu*," "*Patrias tentasti iuvencus artes*" (*Æn.* xi. 704-717).

<sup>154</sup> The soul from Romagna is Fra Alberigo

<sup>1</sup> The opening words transfer to Lucifer, as with a grim irony, one of the grandest of the Church's Passion hymns, written in the 6th century by Fortunatus, Bishop of Poitiers—

*"Vexilla regis prodeunt,  
 Fulget crucis mysterium,  
 Quo carne carnis conditor  
 Suspensus est patibulo"*

Now I was there—with fear my rhymes I find— 10  
 Where every spirit lies all covered o'er,  
 And shows like straw in crystal vase confined;  
 Some prostrate lie, some stand up evermore,  
 Some on their feet, and others on their head,  
 Some, like an arch, with head to feet turned o'er. 15  
 When just so far our steps did onward tread,  
 It pleased my Master unto me to shew  
 Him who once all created beauty led.  
 He from before me moved, and left me so.  
 "Look thou on Dis," he said, "lo! here thou'rt come, 20  
 Where thou well armed with boldness needs must go"  
 How icy cold I then became and numb,  
 Ask it not, Reader, for I cannot write;  
 All language would be weak that dread to sum  
 Death was not mine, yet life had failed me quite; 25  
 Bethink thee now, if that thy wit be keen,  
 What I became of both bereaved outright.  
 The Emperor of that dolorous realm was seen,  
 From his breast upwards issuing from the ice;  
 And nearer I to giant's bulk, I ween, 30  
 Than giants to his arms' great stature rise.  
 Now what the whole thou canst imagine well,  
 Which to the part is fashioned in like guise.  
 Were he as fair once as he now is fell,  
 And then against his Maker raised his head, 35  
 Well might from him proceed all woes of Hell.

<sup>11</sup> In the last and lowest circle, the immersion of the lost souls in the frozen lake, which we have seen in its several stages, is now complete, so complete that none are recognised, and the representatives of the Giudecca are confined to the three who are in the jaws of Lucifer.

<sup>12</sup> The sin of Lucifer, the "Son of the Morning" (Dante follows the patristic interpretation of the *idol* of *Isa* xiv 12), was in Christian tradition that he fell, in the hour of his creation, into the sin of pride on contemplating his own ineffable beauty, and that this led to his rebellion. Comp *Purg* xii 25, *Par* xix 47.

<sup>20</sup> The word "emperor" had been used in C 1 124 of God. Here it is fitly used of the supreme enemy of God. Comp *Par* xii 40, xxv 41.

<sup>31</sup> Arithmetical commentators amuse themselves with calculating the archfiend's height, starting from the pine-cone of St Peter's in C xxxi 59, and arrive at the conclusion that it was about 4212 feet, more or less.

<sup>36</sup> Dante, like Milton and the teaching of Catholic theologists generally, accepts the fall of Satan, itself explained by the assumption that created perfection implied perfect freedom of will, and therefore the possibility of sin, as the explanation of all subsequent evil, moral and physical, in the history of the universe. (So Brunetto in his *Esopetto*, c vii.)

O how it seemed to me a marvel dread  
 When on one head I saw a threefold face !  
 One looked in front, and that was fiery red ;  
 The other twain close by it held their place, 40  
 Above the middle of each shoulder-blade,  
 And rose and joined beneath the crest's embrace  
 The right a tint of yellowish-white displayed ;  
 The left was such to look on as are those  
 There where Nile's waters have an outlet made. 45  
 Beneath each head two outspread wings arose,  
 Large, as befitted such a bird as that ;  
 No ship at sea such monstrous canvas shows ,  
 No feathers had they, but like those of bat  
 Their fashion was, and so the pinions tossed, 50  
 That three strong blasts went forth from where he sat ,  
 By them Cocytus was all bound in frost.  
 With his six eyes he weeps , o'er threefold chin  
 The rain of tears and bloody drivel crossed,  
 And with the teeth each misshaped mouth within, 55  
 In flax-mill wise, he crunched a sinner's frame,  
 So that three souls he tortured for their sin  
 To him in front the bite as nought became  
 To the fierce clawing, which oft left the spine  
 Stripped bare of all the skin that from it came. 60

<sup>38</sup> Agreeing in this speculative point, Milton and Dante are divided, as by a whole heaven, in their treatment of the rebel angel. When the former spoke of the "archangel ruined," whose "form had not yet lost all its original brightness," he must have written with a full knowledge of what Dante had written before him, and his picture must therefore have been of the nature of a deliberate protest. Dante's view, it need hardly be added, is that which is embodied in the grotesque demons of mediæval art, as seen, e.g., in Orcagna's frescoes in the Campo Santo of Pisa (*Annals* p. 234), and in S. Maria Novella at Florence (*D'Agincourt*, III *Pl.* 119), and Giotto's in the Chapel of the Bargello (*Crowe* I p. 260-262), painted in 1300, which actually reproduce the picture of the three sinners in the mouth of the triple-headed Satan. The symbol is, indeed, said to have been common before Dante (*Didron*, *Hist. de l'Art*, in *Weg.* 609). Evil from his standpoint was to be represented as base and hideous, with no element of nobleness remaining. The three faces have received many different interpretations: (1) They have been taken as the symbol of a Trinity of Evil, the antithesis of the Divine attributes of power, wisdom, charity, as in C III 4-6, and therefore impotence, ignorance, and hatred, or pride, envy, and impiety. (2) The three colours have been treated as representing the three parts of the world then known, Europe, Asia, and Africa (*Lomb. Phil.*, and many others), or as symbolic respectively of the three passions, anger, envy, and despair. So Milton *P. L.* IV 144, who, however, eliminates the grotesque element. (3) The political school of commentators see in the red face the type of the Guelphs, whose banner was of that colour, in the black, that of the Neri of Florence, in the yellow, that of the *flours de lys*, on the shield of France. Of the three (1) seems most in harmony with Dante's mind.

<sup>46</sup> The six wings seem the only survivor of the higher than archangelic state from which Lucifer had fallen (*Isa.* vi 2, *Rev.* iv 8).

<sup>49</sup> The bat is, perhaps, chosen as the emblem of the will that "loves darkness rather than light because its deeds are evil."

<sup>52</sup> The explanation of the phenomenon that had perplexed Dante 10 C XXXIII 103-105

"That soul up there who pays the heaviest fine  
 Is Judas," spake my Guide, "Iscaiot,  
 Whose legs without with head inside combine.  
 Of the other two, whose heads have downward got,  
 Brutus is he who in the black mouth lies— 65  
 See how he writhes, yet speaketh not a jot —  
 That other Cassius is, so gross in size.  
 But the night climbs, and now to take our way  
 The hour hath come, for all hath met our eyes."  
 Then, as he pleased, upon his neck I lay, 70  
 And he the vantage seized of time and place,  
 And when the wings with room enough did play,  
 He laid fast hold where shaggy sides gave space,  
 From rock to rock descended downward then,  
 And 'twixt the ice and thick hair moved apace. 75  
 When we had reached the point where legs of men  
 Turn round upon the thickness of the thighs,  
 My Guide, with toil and eager-breathing strain,  
 Where his legs had been made his head uprise,  
 And as a climber grasped the hairy skin , 80  
 So deemed I Hell once more would meet mine eyes.  
 "Keep fast thy hold, for by such stairs we win  
 Our way up," said my Master wearily,  
 "Thus, and not else, from this vast world of sin "

<sup>62</sup> The combination of the three traitors is the culminating point of Dante's political system as developed in the *De Monarchia* (in 16). The Church and the Empire are, each within its own sphere, the representatives of the Divine Government. The salvation of the world, the happiness of mankind, depend on the full and righteous exercise of the powers of each within that sphere. The treachery of Judas was a sin against the Divine Head and Founder of the Church, that of Brutus and Cassius against the divinely appointed head and founder of the Empire. All three were sinners alike against God and against humanity, sharers in the sin of Satan, their treachery being aggravated, as his was, by ingratitude towards their benefactors. The allocation of the three traitors to the three heads, gives some colour to one of the ethical interpretations noted above. Judas sinned through avarice, Brutus through pride, Cassius through envy.

<sup>67</sup> The description of Cassius as "gross in size" is at variance with Plutarch, who speaks of him (*Brut* 29, *Ces* 62), as Shakespeare does, as "lean and hungry." Possibly Dante mixed him up with L. Cassius, whom Cicero (*Catil* iii.) describes as "fat."

<sup>68</sup> The night is that which follows Good Friday. The circuit of Hell has been made in twenty-four hours. Dante is not to spend his Easter Eve in it.

<sup>73</sup> The exit from Hell reaches the extreme point of grotesqueness. The example of Virgil at the close of *Æn.* vi. the authority of the "*Hoc opus, hic labor est*" (*Æn.* vi. 128), forbade the slow process of a re-ascend through all the circles that he had traversed. Virgil had cut the knot by leading *Æneas* through the "ivory gate" of false visions of the night (*Æn.* vi. 599). Dante, falling back on his physical geography, remembered that the centre of the earth is also the centre of gravity, that if that were once past, there might be a way leading to the upper world again, but that in order to be in the normal attitude of man when that passage was effected, it would be necessary to effect a somersault. When this is done, he looks from the rock, and sees, not the head, but the legs of Lucifer quivering in the air. The way by which the two pilgrims travelled is left undescribed, save that it is difficult, rough, and dark, like a cavern, and that the ascent, like the descent, was accomplished in twenty four hours.

Then through a rock's wide hole he passed on high,  
 And made me sit upon a margin there,  
 Then straightway took his cautious steps to me.  
 I raised mine eyes, and thought to see full clear,  
 As I had left him, Lucifer upright ;  
 And lo ! I saw him now his legs uprear ; 90  
 And if I then was startled at the sight,  
 Let the coarse herd conceive who do not see  
 What the point was I passed with step so light.  
 " Rise on thy feet," then said my Guide to me ;  
 " Long is the way and evil is the road, 95  
 And soon the sun in middle tierce will be."  
 It was no stately hall of king's abode,  
 There where we went, but like a natural cave,  
 Where rough the floor, and scanty light is showed.  
 " Before I tear myself from this drear grave, 100  
 My Master," said I, as I stood erect,  
 " Speak a few words from error me to save.  
 Where is the ice ? and what works this effect,  
 That he there's upside down ? How hath the sun  
 So quick from eve to morn made course direct ?" 105  
 And he to me : " Thou still art dreaming on.  
 As on the centre's other side, where I  
 My way o'er that world-piercing serpent won,  
 While I came down, on that side thou didst lie ,  
 Then, when I turned, thou didst the point pass through 110  
 To which all weights from every quarter fly,  
 And 'neath the hemisphere dost now pursue  
 Thy way, which is of that the opposite,  
 Which the dry laud o'erhangs, 'neath whose vault slow

90 "Middle tierce" is, in the Church reckoning of the 13th century, which Dante follows (*Conv.* iv 23), an hour and a half after sunrise, half-way to the third hour, the starting point varying with the length of the day. Virgil speaks, it must be noted, from the point of view of the new hemisphere in which the pilgrims are now travelling. It had been night before (l. 68), it is now morning (l. 118), the dawn of Easter Monday.

110 In the physical geography of the 13th century it was held that, as the hemisphere then known as the abode of man was predominantly land, so the other was, with the exception of the Mountains of Purgatory, entirely of water. Jerusalem (the thought came perhaps from *Ezek.* v 5) was the centre of the land-hemisphere, and is defined as the "vault" or culminating point, where the Sinless One suffered. Lucifer fell from Heaven on the side of the water hemisphere, the earth's contents fled before him and appeared above the waters, while the land, disturbed as he fell, rose to form the island-mountain, and left the cavernous opening through which the pilgrims now wound their way upwards, and was then chosen for the first home of man, the earthly Paradise.

They Him whose birth and life were sinless quite. 115  
 Thou hast thy feet upon the little sphere  
 Which brings Giudecca's other face to sight ;  
 Here it is morning when 'tis evening there,  
 And he whose hair as ladder served us well  
 Is fast fixed still as he did then appear. 120  
 On this side 'twas that he from high Heaven fell,  
 And all the land that here was prominent  
 Through fear of him beneath the ocean's swell  
 Took refuge, and beneath our half-sphere went ,  
 And that which here is seen perchance forsook 125  
 Its place to flee, upgathering its extent "  
 There is, from Belzebub as far, a nook,  
 As is the deep of that vast tomb below,  
 Known by a streamlet's sound—'twere vain to look—  
 Which in a hollow rock doth downward go 130  
 Through channel it has made in lapse of age,  
 Which slopes down gently as its waters flow.  
 My Guide and I then made our pilgrimage,  
 On that dark road the world of light to find,  
 And, with no care to halt at any stage, 135  
 We upward clomb, he first and I behind,  
 So that I saw tho things that beauteous are,  
 By high Heaven borne, in opening round defined ,  
 Thence passed once more to behold each star.

<sup>127</sup> Dante adopts the current tradition of the Church, inherited from the Jews, which identified the Beelzebub of *1 Kings* i. 2) with the prince of the demons, and therefore with Lucifer and Satan (*Matt* xii 24-26).

<sup>128</sup> The streamlet, if we care to ask questions, may probably be thought of as an outlet of the Lethe of *Purg* xxxiii 9. Sins remembered and retained, as in the rivers of Hell, especially Cocytus, & ns forgotten and forgiven, all contribute to the everlasting cold which is the doom of their first author.

<sup>129</sup> The duration of the journey would seem to have been, like that of the descent, twenty-four hours. It was noon in l. 105. It is morn again in *Purg* i. 13.

<sup>130</sup> It is characteristic that each division of the poem ends with the word "star." To see them is the first joy on escaping from Hell. To mount to them is the bliss of the cleansed spirit (*Purg* xxxiii 146). The fulness of the beatific vision lies in the thought that the light which moves them moves also the desire and will of each individual soul (*Purg* xxxiii 145). Many poets have written of the starry heavens. No poet has ever received their voiceless preaching more fully than Dante. We can enter into his feeling when he refused to accept his return from exile under degrading conditions, and asked "Can I not in all places enjoy the light of the sun and of the stars?" (*Ep* 10, *Prat O M* in p. 500).



# PURGATORY.

## CANTO I.

*Invocation—The Beauty of the Skies—Cato of Utica.—The Cleansing of the  
Pilgrim's Face—The new Girdle.*

For fairer waters now before the wind  
Her sails my spirit's little boat doth spread,  
Which leaves so dark and stern a sea behind;  
And I will sing that second realm instead,  
Wherein man's spirit frees itself from stain, 5  
And groweth worthy Heaven's high courts to tread.  
Let Poesy, that was dead, rise again,  
O holy Muses, since that yours am I,  
And let Calliope lift up her strain,  
Following my song with that sweet melody 10  
Which smote the wretched pies, and made them own  
All hope of pardon passed for ever by.  
The orient sapphire's hue of sweetest tone,  
Which gathered in the aspect, calm and bright,  
Of that pure air as far as Heaven's first zone, 15

<sup>1</sup> The opening lines breathe a sense of relief in passing from the horrors of the Inferno to the milder clime of Purgatory. That relief would hardly have been felt had Dante adopted the traditional belief of the Schoolmen ( *Lomb Sent* iv. 45A, *Aquin Summ* iii 69), which placed Purgatory in close neighbourhood to Hell, like it in its torments, save that here the torments were remedial. With so almost startling boldness, Dante devises a Purgatory of his own, a solitary mountain rising from the waters, which, in his geography, were believed to cover one whole hemisphere of the earth, and crowded with the earthly Paradise.

<sup>2</sup> The image was a favourite one. *Comp Sonn* 32, *Conv* ii 1, *Par* ii. 1-9, xxiii. 67.

<sup>3</sup> The invocation of Calliope is an echo of *Æn* ix. 525, *Met* v 338-340.

<sup>4</sup> The nine daughters of Pierius, king of Thessaly, challenged the nine Muses to a trial of skill, and chose to sing the praises of the Titans who warred against Jupiter. The end was that they confessed themselves conquered, and were changed into magpies (*Met* v 294-678).

<sup>5</sup> The oriental sapphire was that which was held by jewellers in higher esteem than others. Its colour was recognised as the symbol of Hope. Hence, perhaps, it was chosen specially for Bishop's rings. *Exod.* xxiv. 10 may have been in Dante's thoughts.

<sup>6</sup> The first circle is that of the moon, as nearest the earth (*Par* ii 30). The whole scene is that of a cloudless Easter-tide morning on the Mediterranean.



Now to mine eyes brought back the old delight,  
 Soon as I passed forth from the dead, dank air,  
 Which eyes and heart had veiled with saddest night.  
 The planet whence love floweth, sweet and fair,  
 Clothed all the orient with a smiling grace, 20  
 Veiling the Fishes, that her escort were.  
 I to the right hand turned, my mind to place  
 On th' other pole, and four stars there beheld,  
 Ne'er seen by any but man's primal race;  
 From their bright flames o'er Heaven a new joy welled. 25  
 O widowed clime of this our Northern sphere,  
 From sight of these by Nature's law withheld!  
 When I had ta'en my leave of gazing there,  
 A little turning towards the other pole,  
 Where I had seen the great Wain disappear, 30  
 I saw, hard by, an old man standing sole,  
 Worthy of so much reverence in his mien,  
 More could no father claim of filial soul  
 Long was his beard, and white hairs there were seen,  
 Which with his flowing locks agreed in hue, 35  
 That o'er his breast fell down, a twofold screen.

<sup>19</sup> The star is the planet Venus, the symbol, as in *Par* viii 1-12, at once of human and Divine love, seen now as the Morning Star. Astronomical calculations have shown that Venus at the end of March 1300 would rise after the sun (*Par* i), and the Fishes before it, but it is scarcely worth while examining the poet's description by the test of science.

<sup>20</sup> The four stars are probably a reminiscence of what Dante had heard from Marco Polo, who was in Venice from 1295 onward, or from some other oriental travellers at Genoa or Pisa, or what he had read in the writings of Arabian geographers or astronomers, of the constellation known as the Southern Cross (*Humb* ii 667). Here they are symbols of the four cardinal virtues of pre-Christian ethics—fortitude, temperance, justice, prudence (*C* xxxi 106)—as the three stars of *C* viii 89 are of faith, hope, and charity. Both as stars and as virtues they had been seen in their brightness only by Adam and Eve. One may leave, noticed, but not discussed, the view that at the traditional date of the creation, *c.* 4004, they might have been north of the Equator, and that their present position is a result of the precession of the equinoxes. The disappearance of the Wain (*Ursa Major*) may be simply an astronomical note, but possibly there may here also be something to read between the lines. Marco Polo dwells on the strangeness of not seeing the pole-star as he went into southern latitudes, such as Java and Madagascar (*Vuile*, i 265).

<sup>21</sup> The choice of Cato as the warder of Purgatory appears strange enough. As a virtuous heathen, he might have been placed with his wife, Marcia, in the *limbus* of *H* ii as a suicide, he might have been doomed, like Peter de Vineis, to the seventh circle of Hell (*H* xiii 58), as an enemy of Cæsar, he might have gone yet lower down. Lucan, however (probably also the single reference in *Æn* viii 670), had obviously impressed Dante's mind with a profound admiration for Cato as one of the great heroes of the ancient world. He had chosen death rather than the loss of liberty (*Mon* ii 5). He was worthy, more than any man, to be a type of God, whose call he obeyed even in the manner of his death. Marcia's return to him was a parallel of the soul's return to God (*Conv* iv 28). That last thought, over and above a certain sense of likeness in character and fortune, presents the point of contact with the position which Dante assigns to him. He became the representative instance of the law of *Acts* x 35.

<sup>22</sup> The filumene face and beard are clearly symbolic of the measure in which Cato had been, as it were, transfigured in Dante's mind by the four natural virtues. Such a man, as having been a law unto himself (*Rom* ii 14), might well be the warder of the Mountain in which souls were to recover their lost natural righteousness, and made meet for the supernatural.

The rays of those four stars, so pure and true,  
 Adorned his face with such surpassing light,  
 It was as though the sun's face met my view.  
 "Who are ye, ye who 'gainst the dark stream's might 40  
 Have from the everlasting prison fled?"  
 So spake he, shaking reverend locks and white;  
 "Who was your guide? What lamp its radiance shed,  
 As ye passed forth from out the night's deep gloom,  
 Which blackens aye that valley dark and dread? 45  
 Are then the laws of that abyss of doom  
 Thus broken, or is counsel new in Heaven,  
 That ye, though damned, to these my caverns come?"  
 Then by my Guide to me a grasp was given,  
 And I, by words and hands and many a sign, 50  
 To homage of the knee and brow was driven.  
 Then answered he, "My coming is not mine;  
 A Lady came from Heaven, and with her prayers  
 Did him who stands here to my help consign.  
 But since it is thy will to know how fares 55  
 It with us, fully and in very deed,  
 My will to say thee 'Nay' in no wise cares.  
 Not yet is he from life's last evening freed,  
 But through his madness came to it so near,  
 He had but few short moments to recede. 60  
 So, as I said, 'twas mine this charge to bear,  
 To rescue him, nor was there other way  
 Than this by which I came and now am here.  
 'Twas mine the race accursed to display,  
 And now I purpose he those souls should know 65  
 Who here are cleansed beneath thy sovran sway  
 How I have led, 'twere long to thee to show,  
 But power that helps me doth from Heaven descend,  
 That he may thee by sight and hearing know.

<sup>41</sup> Cato apparently had seen the pilgrims as they emerged from the cavern pathway that led from the abyss (*H* xxxiv 133), but he takes them for lost souls who, contrary to the law of *Matt* v 26, perhaps also of *H* iii 9, had effected their escape.

<sup>52</sup> We note the fulness and courtesy of Virgil's answer to Cato, as contrasted with his simple assertion of Divine power in his reply to Charon (*H* iii 95).

<sup>56</sup> The thoughts of natural and spiritual death are intermingled in the lines that follow. For the whole passage, comp *H* ii. 52-103.

Him on his course I pray thee now befriend ; 70  
 He wanders seeking freedom, gift men bless,  
 As he knows well who life for her doth spend ,  
 Thou know'st it, since death lost its bitterness  
 In Utica, where vesturo thou didst leave,  
 Which the Great Day in glorious sheen shall dress 75  
 The eternal laws from us no wrong receive ;  
 He lives, and Minos lets me roam at will ;  
 I of that circle am where yet doth live  
 Thy Marcia with chaste eyes, who seemeth still,  
 O holy heart, to pray thee take her back , 80  
 For her love's sake then this our wish fulfil.  
 Let us our way through thy seven kingdoms track,  
 And of thy favour I will her apprise,  
 Wish for remembrance there thou canst not lack ”  
 “ So great the joy that Marcia gave mine eyes 85  
 While I in yon world lived,” then answered he,  
 “ That every wish I met as it did rise ,  
 Now that beyond that evil stream dwells she,  
 She can no longer move me, who obey  
 That law which passed when I was thence set free 90  
 But if a heavenly Lady guides thy way,  
 As thou dost tell, there needs no flattering speech ,  
 Let it suffice thee in her name to pray.  
 Go then, and gird thou this man, as I teach,  
 With a smooth rush, and see thou cleanse his face, 95  
 So that each stain that lingers there thou bleach ,

<sup>72</sup> The liberty which Dante was seeking was spiritual, that for which Cato died political, but here also the two thoughts overlap one another. Cato had lived not for himself, but for the whole world (*Conv* iv 27, *Mon* ii 5).

<sup>75</sup> The words seem almost to imply the admission of Cato to the regions of the blessed, and, looking to the position of Rhipeus in *Par* xx 68, this is, at least, possibly Dante's meaning. If not, we must think of him as including the virtuous heathen in the words of *Dau* xii 3, even though they are not admitted to the supreme beatific vision.

<sup>79</sup> Marcia (*H* iv 128) had been first Cato's wife, was separated from him, returned to him in old age with the freshness of her first love, and sought that

*Liceat tumulo scripsisse Catonis*

*Marcia*

—*Luc* ii 341

This, as said above, is taken by Dante as an allegory of the soul's return to God (*Conv* iv 28).

<sup>80</sup> The evil river = Acheron (*H* iii 78).

<sup>82</sup> The “law” implied seems to be that which separated Cato from the other souls, who, on the descent into Hades, were placed in the *limbus*, while he was made warder of the Mountain of Cleansing, to which none, before that date, had been admitted. The husband and the wife, in the inscrutable decrees of God, had to remain in the place assigned to each, and the ties that had united them were broken.

<sup>85</sup> Remembering *H* xvi 106, we trace a profound meaning in the new symbol. Dante had cast aside the “cord” of an outward ascetic rule. He is now to gird himself with the low-

For 'twere not meet his eye with any trace  
 Of cloud and mist to that first Angel go,  
 Of those who have in Paradise their place.  
 This little island all around, below, 100  
 There, where the billows beat upon the shore  
 On the soft ooze, bids reeds and rushes grow,  
 No other plant that leaves and branches bore,  
 Or hardened grew, could there its life sustain,  
 For they yield not as each stroke passeth o'er. 105  
 Then by this way return ye not again.  
 The sun, now rising, will direct you well  
 The mountain's height with easier climb to gain."  
 Then vanished he; and not a syllable  
 I spake, but rose, and backward then I sped, 110  
 Close to my guide, with gaze that on him fell  
 He then began "My son, in my steps tread,  
 Let us turn back; on this side slopes the plain,  
 By slow descent to its low boundances led"  
 Near was the dawn its triumph bright to gain 115  
 O'er morning's mist that vanished, so that I  
 Knew from afar the trembling of the main.  
 Along the lonely plain our feet we ply,  
 As one who finds the pathway he had missed,  
 And deems till then he wanders fruitlessly. 120  
 When we had reached the point where dews resist  
 The sun's heat most, and being where the shade  
 Is falling, slowly vanish into mist,  
 Then both his hands upon the grass outspread  
 My Master placed, with sweetness wonderful; 125  
 And when his meaning was to me conveyed,

growing plant rush, as the emblem of humility (1 *Pet* v 5). And, as he does this, he is to wash, not his feet (as in *Joh* xiii 5-12), but his face. The contemplation of evil and its punishment leaves a stain and a dimness which are adverse to the soul's purity, and to the clearness of vision which is the condition of seeing God. On the symbolism of the rush, see Rusk *M P* ii 232.

<sup>99</sup> The "first minister" is the pilot angel of C ii 43.

<sup>108</sup> The natural man prides himself on resisting the adverse blasts of fortune (as Dante himself seems to do), but true humility sees in them the discipline appointed by the Divine will and submits (*Par* xvii 23).

<sup>115</sup> The *ora* of the Italian stands for *aurea*, not *hora*. The dawn scatters the early mist and shows the trembling of the waters. Line 117 is an echo of the *splendet tremulo sub lumine pontus* of *Æn.* vii 9. The "innumerable smile" of *Æsch P V* was, of course, unknown to Dante.

<sup>119</sup> We note the parallelism of contrast with *H* i 3.

I turned to him my cheeks, where tears fell full ;  
 Then to my face he did the hue restore  
 Which Hell had hidden, and left veiled and dull.  
 So came we down upon the desert shore, 130  
 Which ne'er saw man upon its waters sail,  
 Who then retraced the path he thus passed o'er.  
 There, as that other bade, he did not fail  
 To gird me, and—O wonder!—for as fast  
 As he those rushes gathered, weak and frail, 135  
 There, where he plucked, they sprang ere moment passed.

## CANTO II.

*The Dawn—The Angel Pilot and his Freight of Souls—Meeting with Casella*

THE sun already had the horizon gained,  
 Whose full meridian circle covers o'er  
 Jerusalem, with highest point attained ;  
 And night, whose path wheels where his went before,  
 Forth from the Ganges with the Scales uprose, 6  
 Which she lets fall when reigning high once more,  
 So that Aurora's beauteous cheeks disclose,  
 From where I stand, the white and crimson sheen,  
 Now passing with the hours to orange glows

<sup>129</sup> The almost maternal tenderness of Virgil (*H* xxii 38, xxiv 20) is again seen. The highest office of a noble poet, as a "schoolmaster leading to Christ," is to cleanse the soul from some, at least, of the stains of evil, and so prepare the way for a more thorough purification.

<sup>130</sup> Possibly there is a reference to the voyage of Ulysses as told in *H* xxvi 142.

<sup>131</sup> We are reminded of the "*primo avulso non deficit alter*" of *FF* vi 143. Here it becomes the type of the inexhaustible power of Divine grace, which gives lowliness to all who seek it, even when it works through human wisdom.

<sup>1</sup> It is the morning of March 27th or 28th (Easter Monday or Easter Day). The Mount of Purgatory is the antipodes of Jerusalem, and the two have therefore a common horizon (*H* xxxiv 112). It is nightfall on the Ganges, sunset at Jerusalem, early morning on the mountain. Dante assumes that Jerusalem lies midway between the Ganges and the Pillars of Hercules (*C* xxvii 3). The Scales are the constellation Libra, which is in the meridian at the vernal equinox at midnight, and at the autumnal equinox sets at 9 p.m. The Scales then fall from the hands of Night, when the nights are longer than the days. We note, as before on *H* xi 113-115, the poet's elaborate description of a very simple fact.

<sup>7</sup> The description, like that of *C* i 126, indicates the keen observation of the phenomena of the changes of an Italian dawn in spring—first the white and vermeil tints, then the deeper orange.

Still lingering by the sea our steps did lean, 10  
 As those who on their way move pensively,  
 Who go in heart, and yet with loitering mien.  
 And lo! as when the morning draweth nigh,  
 Through the thick vapour Mars grows fiery red,  
 Down in the west, where ocean's wide plains lie, 15  
 It chanced—so may its beams on me be shed  
 Once more!—a light across the sea so flew,  
 No wing of bird more rapidly had sped.  
 From which as I my gaze awhile withdrew  
 To ask my Leader questions yet again, 20  
 I saw it, as it brighter, fuller grew,  
 And then on either side there did appear  
 I knew not what of white, and then below  
 Came forth another slowly, and drew near.  
 My Master for a while did silent go, 25  
 While those white objects now as wings we saw,  
 Then, when that pilot he began to know,  
 He cried, "Haste, haste, and bend thy knee in awe,  
 Behold God's angel, fold thou then thine hands,  
 Now shalt thou see such ministers of law. 30  
 See how above man's instruments he stands,  
 So that he needs nor oar, nor other sail  
 Than his own wings, between such distant lands.  
 See how he points them heavenward, nor doth fail  
 With his eternal wings to fan the air, 35  
 Nor, as with mortal plumes, does change prevail."  
 Then as he nearer drew to where we were,  
 That bird of God in clearer light was drest,  
 Wherefore mine eye that near sight could not bear,

<sup>13</sup> The readings vary (1) *su'l presso*, (2) *sol presso*, (3) *sul presso*, and others. I follow (1). Another actual reminiscence of Mars seen in the west, while Venus was rising in the east. On Mars, see *Par* xiv 94-102, *Conv* ii 14. In the latter passage Dante mentions that fiery vapours in the form of a cross were seen near Mars at Florence in the beginning of her troubles.

<sup>26</sup> Various readings give *aperer*, *apparver*, and *apparer*.

<sup>30</sup> Another contrast with the journey through Hell. There Dante had seen only lost souls and demons. Now he is to see the angels of God on their ministries of service.

<sup>31</sup> The boat moves without oars or sail or other instruments (this is clearly the meaning of *argomenti*), solely by the volition of the angel. Comp. the canzone, "*voi che intendendo*" and the comment on it in *Conv* ii. 14. So also *Par* i 103-126.

<sup>32</sup> The use of "bird" as applied to the angel may have come from Statius, who applies "*ales*" and "*volucer*" to Mercury (*Theb* i 492, *Silv* i 2, 102).

But down I bent it. Then he came to rest 40  
     Hard by the shore, with boat so quick and light,  
     It barely skimmed the waves that round it pressed.  
 The heavenly pilot on the stern upright  
     Stood, with all blessing on his look enrolled,  
     And in it sat a hundred spirits bright. 45  
 Then "*Israel de Egypto*" heard I told,  
     As with one voice they chanted out their lay,  
     With all the psalm doth afterward unfold.  
 Then on them he the cross's sign did lay,  
     And they all threw themselves upon the shore, 50  
     And quick, as when he came, he went his way.  
 The crowd there left behind, as not before  
     Familiar with the region, gazed around,  
     As one who seeketh new things to explore.  
 The sun's bright darts were speeding with quick bounds, 55  
     Those shafts with which, as weapons bright and keen,  
     The Capricorn he chased from Heaven's mid-grounds  
 When that new people, with a questioning mien,  
     Looked to us, asking, "If the way ye know,  
     Show where the path to scale the Mount is seen." 60  
 And Vugil answered, "Ye believe, I trow,  
     That we have had experience of this place,  
     But we are strangers, e'en as ye are so,  
 Before you we have come a little space,  
     And by another way, so steep and dread, 65  
     'Twill seem but sport the ascending path to trace"

<sup>43</sup> The angel is, so to speak, the Charon of Purgatory, and his boat that of which Charon had spoken (*H* iii. 93). The boat has come, it will be remembered, from the mouth of the Tiber (*I* 101).

<sup>44</sup> The *v. farsa* for *parva* gives the suggestive thought that even to hear the report of the angel's majesty would be as a foretaste of the blessedness of Heaven.

<sup>45</sup> The words strike the keynote of the *Purg.* The hymns, psalms, and anthems of the Church, with the music which was their fit accompaniment, are as much the characteristic of this part of the *Comus* as groans and sighs and thunder are of the *Inferno*. Ps. cxiv, which meets us here, has the interest of having been specially chosen by Dante himself as a representative instance of the fourfold method of interpretation (*Comus* ii. 1). In the letter, it is simply historical, allegorically it typifies redemption, morally conversion, anagogically (for which, perhaps, our "mystically" is the best equivalent), the exodus of the soul from the bondage of corruption to the glorious liberty of the sons of God (*Ep. Can. Grande*, 7). The addition in *v.* 48 is to be noted. We must read the whole Psalm (the last verse especially) mystically in order to understand what Dante read into it. It may be noted that the Psalm had been from the sixth century in use in the Western Church in the last offices for the dying and in the burial of the dead (*Mart.* iii. 25, 381, 403, *Mass M R* i pp. 105, 118). Dante may have heard it at the death of father or mother, or in the Church of S. Lucia by the grave of Beatrice. It was also used at Vespers every Sunday, Easter-day included (*Brev. Rom.*) Comp. a beautiful hymn, "In the going forth from Egypt," by the Rev. Canon Bright, D.D.

<sup>47</sup> The time indicated is reckoned by commentators at from half an hour to two hours after sunrise.

The souls, who clearest proof of me had read  
 That I was living, breathing vital airs,  
 Now waxed all pale and were astonished,  
 And as to messenger who olive bears 70  
 The people gather, bent the naws to hear,  
 And each to trample on the others dares,  
 So with fixed gaze upon me they did stare,  
 That troop of happy spirits, as if each  
 Forgat the cleansing that should make them fair 75  
 And one I saw before the others reach,  
 As if to embrace me, with such warmth of love,  
 It did my heart like action promptly teach.  
 O ye who, save to sight, mere shadows move !  
 Three times around it I my hands did fold, 80  
 Thrice on my breast did those hands empty prove,  
 My looks, I trow, my thoughts of wonder told,  
 For then the spirit smiled and back did flee,  
 And I in zeal to follow him waxed bold.  
 Sweetly he bade me stay, and tranquil be. 85  
 Then knew I who he was, and made my prayer  
 That he would halt awhile to speak with me,  
 He answered me, "As thou of old wast dear  
 To me i' tho flesh, so art thou, now I'm freed;  
 Therefore I stop. But wherefore com'st thou here?" 90  
 "Casella mine ! that I once more may speed  
 This path again, my journey now is made,"  
 Said I, "but why was such delay decreed?"

<sup>70</sup> The old Greek and Roman custom which placed wreaths of olive on the brow, or a branch to the hand, of the messenger of peace or victory, seems to have lingered on through the Middle Ages (Soph. *Ed. R.* 80-82, *Æn.* viii 116, xi 100). A picture has been painted by Mr F. W. Topham, "A Messenger of Good Tidings," representing a horseman bearing on high a branch of olive as he brings news of relief to Florence in 1496 (*H. W. P.*). The newly arrived souls gaze on the living man whom they see on landing, as the crowd at Florence or Verona gazed on such a messenger. Wonder passed into sympathy, sympathy to love.

<sup>75</sup> The souls of the saved seem thought of as clothed in a quasi-corporeal form, more subtle than those of the lost (*H.* vii 111, xxix 75). The lines that follow are a direct reproduction of *Æn.* vi 699-701.

<sup>81</sup> But one solitary record—a note to a madrigal by Lemmo di Pistola in the Vatican, that it was set to music by Casella—remains beyond what Dante tells us of his friend. From Milton onwards (*Sonn. on H. Laws*), most Dante students have seen in this one of the most charming episodes of the poem, helping us to understand the poet's youth, with all its high aspirations, its love of music and song, its capacity for friendship. The date of Casella's death is unknown, but the text indicates that it was some months, or it may be years, before 1300. The Angel of Purgatory is ever bearing the souls of the dead, who are capable of purification and need it, from the mouth of the Liberator, but takes no leaves at his discretion. Casella, who is, as it were, the Palmaria of the *Purg.* (*Æn.* iii 202, v 833, vi 337), has been often left behind. Dante wonders that he is among the new arrivals. The explanation is that he must have stayed still longer, but that the Indulgence proclaimed for the year of



And he: "No cruel wrong on me is laid,  
 If he who takes both when and whom he will 95  
 Hath many a time my passage here gainsaid,  
 For all he does is ruled by righteous will.  
 These three months past he hath been wont to take  
 Whoe'er with peace his course would fain fulfil,  
 Whence I, who by the shore did sojourn make, 100  
 Where Tiber to the salt wave tribute brings,  
 Was by him welcomed as for pity's sake.  
 He to that outlet now outspreads his wings,  
 For evermore the souls are gathered there  
 Whom no decree to Acheron downward flings." 105  
 And I "If no new law from thee doth tear  
 The skill or memory of thy songs of love,  
 Which used to calm of yore each eager care,  
 I pray thee still thy power to comfort prove  
 On this my soul, which, with its fleshly mould 110  
 O'erburdened, sad and sorrowful doth move"  
 "O Love, who with my soul dost converse hold,"  
 He then began so sweetly to intone,  
 That still its sweetness thrills me as of old  
 My Master and I too, and every one 115  
 Of those with him, seemed in it fully blest,  
 As if their minds could dwell on that alone.  
 That music did the thoughts of all arrest,  
 Fixed and intent, when lo! the old man cried,  
 "Ye laggard spirits! why so quick to rest? 120  
 What means this? What neglect your feet hath tied?  
 Haste to the Mount, and purge the soil away  
 Which from your eyes the face of God doth hide."

Jubilee, beginning from Christmas 1299, had led the Angel to bring all who sought to come (See the Bull of Boniface VIII in Boehmer, *Corp. Jur. Canon.* ii 1192, in *Scart.*) The strange legend as to the Tiber is perhaps a symbol of the dogma *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. The souls of imperfect Christians wail in the *Ante Purgatorium*, as penitents, to the ancient discipline of the Church, wailed in the church porch. I have not traced the existence of the belief elsewhere. Had Dante found it at Rome as a new-born mythus engendered by the excitement of the Jubilee, or did he hear it from his friend the Bishop of Ostia?

106 The "new law" indicates a doubt rising out of the words of Cato (*C.* i 85-90). Could the disembodied soul renew the memories of the old friendship which was so great a joy on earth?

112 The *Canzone* which thus begins furnishes the subject of the Third Book of the *Conv.* Had Casella set it to music in those bygone days? Could any words paint the effect of such music on a poet's soul better than those of l 208?

118 "*Eravam*," not *andavam*, is obviously the right reading. Cato reproves the souls for loitering.

122 Beneath the veil of the outward story we read the thought that no memories of the

E'en as the doves who through the meadows stray,  
 Gathering or grain or darnel tranquilly, 125  
 And not a whit their wonted pride display,  
 If aught they see which them doth terrify,  
 Will of a sudden cease to seek their food,  
 Because a greater care constrains to fly,  
 So saw I then that newly gathered brood, 130  
 Cease from the song and flee towards the hill,  
 As one who goes, nor knows the goal pursued ;  
 Nor moved we onward with less eager will.

### CANTO III.

*The Journey to the Mountain of Cleansing—The Souls that wait—The excommunicated Manfred.*

AND then, albeit that their sudden flight  
 Had scattered them through all the wide champaign,  
 Turned to the Mount where leaeth Reason right,  
 I to my comrade true drew close again ;  
 And how should I without him e'er have gone ? 5  
 Who up that mountain would my steps have ta'en ?  
 He seemed to me within himself to groan.  
 O Conscience truly noble, pure, and chaste,  
 How keen the pangs by thee for small ills known !  
 And when his feet had laid aside the haste 10  
 Which robs each gesture of its dignity,  
 My mind, till then within itself embraced,  
 Took wider range, as if with eager eye,  
 And turned my glance upon the mountain near,  
 Which rising from the water seeks the sky. 15

past, however tender, must be allowed to hinder the progress of the soul which is pressing forward to purification

<sup>125</sup> As in *H* v 82, so here, doves furnish the poet with the precise illustration which he needs. Comp *Par* xxv 19.

<sup>129</sup> Reproduced from *V N* c. 13, not perhaps without a reminiscence of Heb xi 8 The act of self-surrender to the discipline of purification is one of the ventures of faith.

<sup>3</sup> "Reason" is probably that of the human soul purified by Divine grace

<sup>4</sup> The sense of companionship and guidance is as strong as ever But what causes Virgil's haste and remorse? Does human wisdom, sympathising with affection, regret that it had allowed the memories of past days to interfere with the disciple's progress, so as to incur the reproach of the more stoical Cato? Was this example of the sensitiveness of conscience needed for the poet's inner self?

The sun, which, fiery red, shone on our rear,  
 Was broken there before me in the way,  
 As on my form its rays were brought to bear.  
 Unto one side I turned in sore dismay,  
 Lest I should be abandoned, when I saw 20  
 That before me alone the shadow lay.  
 And then my Comfort: "Why this faithless awe?"  
 So he began, with face full turned to me,  
 "Think'st thou that I my guidance will withdraw?"  
 'Tis eve already now, where buried he 25  
 The members within which I shadows made  
 Naples now hath it, ta'en from Brindisi.  
 Now if there fall in front of me no shade,  
 Wonder not more than that two separate rays  
 Meet in the heavens, yet neither is delayed. 30  
 To suffer freezing cold and torturing blaze  
 Bodies like this doth Power Supreme ordain,  
 Which wills to veil from us His work and ways.  
 Insane is he who hopes our reason vain  
 Can scale of path the height that knows no end. 35  
 Where Persons Three One Substance doth contain.

<sup>18</sup> The redness of the sun indicates that it was still early dawn, perhaps an hour after sunrise

<sup>21</sup> In Hell there was no light of sun or stars (*H* i. 60, xxxiv 139), and so the phenomenon had not occurred till now

<sup>22</sup> Dante follows the traditional epitaph of Virgil—

"Mantua me genuit Calabri rapuere, tenet nunc  
 Parthenope"

I cannot help quoting a verse from the striking hymn said to have been sung at Mantua in the fifteenth century, and, it may be, earlier, in the Festival of St Paul. St Paul, it was said, went to Naples to visit the tomb of Virgil—

"Ad Maronis mausoleum  
 Ductus, fudit super eum,  
 Pie rerum lacryma,  
 'Quem te,' inquit, 'reddidisse,  
 Si te vivum invenissem,  
 Poetarum Maxime'"—Daniel, *Thes. Hymn.* v 266.

It must be added, however, that Daniel quotes it from Schlosser (*Lied der Kirche*), who says that he could find no MS of the hymn, and had only heard this verse of it, repeated by a brother who had lived at Mantua. On the whole, the evidence is hazy. All that we can say is that, whether Dante had heard it or not, it is in full harmony with his feeling.

<sup>23</sup> The answer points, like St. Paul's in *1 Cor* xv, to the impotence of human reason. God can provide a body material enough to suffer, but too subtle to intercept the light.

<sup>26</sup> The mystery of mysteries prepares the soul to acquiesce in the fact (*quia* in Medieval Latin states a fact and not a reason) without asking for the cause, final or efficient. So in *Arist. An. Post* c 13, and elsewhere, the *ôti* (= fact) is contrasted with the *ôti* (= reason why). Had man's intellect not been finite and clouded, there would have been no need of the Incarnation. Reason must be content to receive the revealed truth in the lowliness of faith. It was through the limitations of their intellect that the wisest of the heathens (in the 'many others' Virgil sorrowfully includes himself) failed to attain to the knowledge of God, the absence of which kept them in the outer *limbus* of unsatisfied desires.

Be ye content, O men, to keep in sight  
 What is, for could ye knowledge full acquire,  
 Then Mary's birth-throes had been needless quite.  
 And thou hast seen the unsatisfied desire 40  
 Of men, whose yearnings then had found repose,  
 Who vainly now eternally aspire.  
 Of Aristotle, Plato, and of those  
 Still many more, I speak,"—and then his head  
 He bowed in silence, brooding o'er his woes. 45  
 Now towards the mountain's base our footsteps sped,  
 And there we found the precipice so steep,  
 That all in vain had been the nimblest tread.  
 The rocks that Lerici and Turbia keep,  
 The barest and most broken, were a stair 50  
 Compared with that, which one might lightly leap.  
 "Who knows which side an easier slope doth bear,"  
 Then said my Master, halting on his way,  
 "That one who has no wings may mount up there?"  
 And while, with eyes down-bending he did stay, 55  
 With eager mind to scrutinise the road,  
 And my gaze upward o'er the rock did stray,  
 On the left hand, a band of souls there showed,  
 Who, as in our direction, moved their feet,  
 Yet hardly seemed to stir, so slow they trod; 60  
 "Lift up thine eyes," I did my Guide entreat,  
 "See one on this side who'll give counsel wise,  
 If thou thyself hast no suggestion meet."  
 Then he looked on me with frank open eyes,  
 And said, "Let us go thither. they come slow, 65  
 And thou, sweet son, to stronger hopes arise."  
 Still was that people as far off, I trow,  
 (I say when we had gone a mile or more)  
 As far as stalwart hands a stone could throw,

<sup>40</sup> The comparison indicates a reminiscence of Riviera travelling, which, before the Cornice Road, must have been rough and perilous enough. Lerici, in the Gulf of Spezzia, Turbia, not far from Villafranca, are named as the boundaries of Liguria. Even so steep was the first climb up the Mount of Purification.

<sup>52</sup> Virgil knew the pathways of Hell (*H* ix 30), but Purgatory was a new region to him. Human wisdom could see the consequences of sin, but was at sea as to the mode of its removal. Both the higher and the lower self look out for the guidance of those who are bound on the same journey. All that Virgil can do is to bid his scholar "hope on, hope ever."

<sup>67</sup> The souls that meet the pilgrims are (l. 136) those who, though repentant at last, have yet died excommunicated. They know the way (*C.* iv 18), which, as yet, they may not tread.

When they all gathered where the hard crags soar 70  
 Of that high cliff, and stood erect and close,  
 As one who, doubting, halts to look before.  
 "Ye spirits, whom Divine foreknowledge chose,  
 Whose end was blest," spake Virgil, "by that peace  
 Wherein, I deem, ye all shall find repose, 75  
 Tell us where slopes the mountain, that with ease  
 We may have power to climb the upward way,  
 The wisest man lost time doth most displease."  
 As tender ewes from out the sheepfold stray,  
 By ones, twos, threes, and others timid stand, 80  
 While on the ground their eyes and noses play,  
 And what the foremost doth, that doth the band,  
 Around her pressing, if to halt she chance,  
 Quiet, though why they do not understand,  
 So I beheld the foremost one advance 85  
 Out of the fold of that blest company,  
 With noble mien and modest shrinking glance.  
 And when those in the vanward did espy,  
 The broken rays that fell upon my right,  
 So that the shadow o'er the rock did lie, 90  
 They halted, and drew back at that same sight;  
 And all the others, who came close behind,  
 Did just the same, though why, unknowing quite.  
 "I own to you, ere questions utterance find,  
 This is a human body which ye see, 95  
 And hence the shadow on the ground defined.  
 Nor marvel ye at this, but deem that he,  
 Not without strength that cometh from on high,  
 Seeks o'er this rampart to find passage free."  
 So spake my Guide, and that good company 100  
 Said "Turn ye then and now before us go,"  
 With back of hands they signalled us to try;  
 And one of them began. "Thou who dost go  
 This way, whoe'er thou art, turn here thine eyes,  
 And think if thou in yon world me didst know " 105

<sup>80</sup> The "head" of the flock is a noun of multitude = the foremost. The souls are startled by the shadow cast by Dante's body, as he had been by the absence of Virgil's shadow (l. 22).

I turned to him, and looked in steadfast wise;  
 Fair was he, goodly, and of gentle mien,  
 But one brow showed a sword-stroke's injuries.  
 And when I humbly said I had not seen  
 His face before, he said, "Then now behold," 110  
 And showed a wound his neck and breast between.  
 Then. "I am Manfred," with a smile he told,  
 "Grandson of Constance, of imperial state,  
 Therefore, when thou art where thou wast of old,  
 Go to my daughter fair, I pray, whom fate 115  
 Hath made the mother of Sicilia's pride,  
 And Arragon's, and there the truth relate,  
 If other tale be told—that, as I died,  
 My body pierced with twofold deadly wound,  
 Weeping I turned to Him whose love flows wide. 120  
 Dreadful and dire the sins that wrapt me round,  
 But such wide arms hath Goodness infinite  
 That room for each returning soul is found,  
 And if Cosenza's pastor had read right—  
 He was by Clement sent my steps to chase— 125  
 This Scripture wisely, as by God's own light,

<sup>112</sup> Manfred, a natural son of the Emperor Frederick II, born in Sicily 1231. *Vill* (vi 46) speaks of him as inheriting both the accomplishments and the nobleness of his father. Their Papal enemies charged Manfred with being an Epicurean, like Frederick, and with indulging in the same license, and accused him of having caused the death of his brother, Conrad and Henry, and even of his father. He was excommunicated by Innocent IV, and was still under that sentence when he fell in 1266 at the battle of Benevento. His body, after being carried through the streets of that town on an ass, was brought before Charles of Anjou. Even the French nobles begged that it might have Christian burial, but the King refused, on the ground that he was still excommunicated, and the body was buried under a cairn of stones at the foot of the bridge at Benevento. Even this, however, did not satisfy the hatred of his Papal foes, and Clement IV sent the Cardinal Archbishop of Cosenza to urge that the body should not be allowed to pollute a land which belonged to the Church, and so the corpse was disinterred and found a final resting place on the banks of the Verde, identified by some writers with the Liris or Gangliano, on the confines of Apulia and the Campagna (*Vill* vii 9, *Milm L C* vi 372, *Arris* 8-10). We note once more, as in the case of Francesca (*H v* 124-138) and Ugolino (*H*, xxiii 19-75) the creative insight of Dante's psychology. No historian records Manfred's penitence: no one had been present to report his last words in the heat of battle. Historians represent him as being licentious and irreligious (*Vill* vi 46). But what Dante had heard of his character (*V E* i 12), perhaps also (l 107) what he had heard of the expression of his face, led him to feel that, in the absence of the belief which placed his father in Hell (*H x* 119), such an one must have repented. A Sicilian chronicle describes him as "*Homo flavus, amana facie, aspectu placabilis, sideris oculis*" (Murat. *Scr. Rer. It.* viii 830).

<sup>113</sup> Constance, daughter of Roger, king of Sicily, and wife of Henry VI, through whom the crown of that island descended to Frederick II.

<sup>115</sup> The daughter is another Constance, who married Peter of Arragon and had three sons, Alphonso (*d* 1291) Frederick, king of Sicily, and James, of Arragon, who are mentioned disparagingly in *C. viii* 119, *Par* xix 130. Was Dante contemplating a visit to Arragon when he wrote?

<sup>121</sup> Did Dante believe the darker charges brought against Manfred? Possibly yes, and therefore made Manfred a typical instance of the infinite Compassion that receives all penitents, even though under Papal excommunication. The limitation by that Compassion of

My bones had still found rest, were that the case,  
 At the bridge-head to Benevento near,  
 Where the vast, cairn stands bulwark of the place  
 Now the rain bathes them, and the storm-winds bear 130  
 Beyond the realm, yea, hard by Verde's stream,  
 By him, with lights extinguished, carried there.  
 Nor by their maledictions lost, I deem,  
 Is Love Eternal beyond power of change,  
 So long as Hope's young buds with verdure gleam. 135  
 True is it he whom hardened sins estrange  
 From Holy Church, though he repent at last,  
 Must needs upon this bank an exile range,  
 Full thirty-fold for all the period past  
 Of his presumptuous sins, unless, perchance, 140  
 Prayers duly offered make the time speed fast.  
 See, if thou canst my blessedness advance,  
 And to my Constance dear the plight reveal  
 Which thou hast seen, and what my hinderance ,  
 We here of prayers on earth the virtue feel." 145

### CANTO IV.

*The steep Ascent—The Penitents of the eleventh Hour—Belacqua.*

WHEN, or through sense of pleasure or of pain,  
 Which seizes on some faculty of ours,  
 The soul doth, as absorbed by it, remain,

Papal power to condemn is, of course, the counterpart of the limitation of its power to absolve, by the Divine Righteousness, in the case of Guido of Montefeltro (*H* xxvii 85-129)

133 The body of Manfred had been thrown out on the banks of the Verde with the ringing of bells and the extinguished, inverted torches which belonged to the ritual of excommunication (*Milm L C* vi 244).

135 Green, as the sign of life, and therefore of hope. It is perhaps suggestive that it was Manfred's favourite colour, and that through life he always dressed in green (*Vill* vi 46)

139 The authority of the Church is, however, so far recognised that the contumacy which does not seek for release from censure must be punished thirty-fold. Hence Manfred, excommunicated by Clement IV in 1265, dying in 1266, was only just admitted to the vestibule of Purgatory

143 The good Constance is the daughter spoken of in l 115

145 Throughout the *Purg* Dante emphasises the doctrine of the Fathers and the Schoolmen as to prayers for the dead. They avail "*ad diminutionem pene*," and as a *satisfaction* for sins (*Aquin. Summa* iii. 71, 2, *Lomb. Sent.* iv 45b). *Cump C* iv 134, v 70, vi. 26, xi. 34.

It seems to give no heed to other powers ;  
     And this refutes their error who surmise                   8  
     That one soul in us o'er another towers ;  
 And hence, when aught doth fall on ears or eyes  
     Which keeps the soul drawn to it mightily,  
     Time, all unheeded by us, onward flies ;  
 For one power is perceptive faculty,                   10  
     The whole soul is the other's residence,  
     And this is as in bonds, while that is free.  
 Of this I had a true experience,  
     So did that spirit's voice my wonder fill ;  
     For fifty full degrees the sun rose thence,                   15  
 And I was not aware of it until  
     We came to where the spirits to us cried,  
     All with one voice, "Lo, here ye have your will"  
 Oft doth the peasant churl a gap more wide  
     Close with a pitchfork full of briar or thorn,                   20  
     When the grape's clusters are by autumn dyed,  
 Than was the pathway where we then did turn,  
     My Guide and I, as I behind him sped,  
     When as that troop away from us were borne  
 Sanleo one may scale, down Noli tread,                   25  
     To Bismantova's topmost height aspire,  
     With feet alone, here needs one wings instead,—  
 Swift wings I mean, and pinions of desire,  
     Led on by him from whom my spirit drew  
     Hope of success, and guiding light of fire.                   30

<sup>8</sup> The condemnation is directed against the Platonic view of three separate souls in man (*Tim* 69, *Anim. de An.* iii.), or, perhaps, the Manichean error, condemned in the eighth General Council (Can. viii.) of two souls. Comp. R. Browning, *A Death in the Desert*. Dante follows the more accurate language of Aquinas (*Summ.* i. 76, qu. 3), that there is one soul, with the potencies or faculties of living, feeling, reasoning (comp. *Conv.* iii. 2, iv. 7). The fact which Dante describes is the concentration of the soul on one thought or sensation, so that all other consciousness is suspended. Of this, Socrates, Aquinas, and Dante himself, of whom it was said that he would stand in meditation motionless for hours together, were notable examples (Smith's *Bibl. Dict.* art. *Trauce*).

<sup>15</sup> The fifty degrees would imply a period of about two hours, during which Dante had taken no heed of time.

<sup>21</sup> The note of time is suggestive. It is just when the grapes are ripening that the keeper of the vineyard stops up every gap. The ethical meaning of the narrow gap is the same as that of the "strait gate" and "narrow way" of *Matt.* vii. 14.

<sup>25</sup> More recollections of Riviera and other travelling (C. iii. 49). San Leo, not far from San Marino, is in the duchy of Urbino, Noli, between Savona and Finale, on the Western Riviera, Bismantova, near Reggio and Modena. Dante had obviously experiences of all three, and had found them sufficiently difficult of ascent. Here keen desire gave wings to feet and hands.



We mounted up, that broksn rock-path through ;  
 And on each side its barriers hemmed us in,  
 And the ground-called for feet and hand-grasp too ;  
 And when our way we to the edge did win  
 Of the high bank which slopes towards the plain, 35  
 "Master," said I, "what way shall we begin ?"  
 "Let not one step," said he, "descend again ;  
 Still press behind me to the mountain's hight,  
 Till some wise Guide to lead us on shall deign."  
 The summit was so high it baffled sight, 40  
 And steeper far it rears its sloping side  
 Than line that doth bisect an angle right.  
 Then I, o'er-spent and weary, thus replied :  
 "O my sweet Father, turn thou here and see  
 How, if thou stay not, I alone abide " 45  
 "My Son, up yonder, onward press," said he,  
 His finger pointing to a ledge above,  
 Which on that side the hill girds evenly.  
 So strong to spur me on his words did prove ;  
 I forced myself, and near him clambered on, 50  
 So that my feet did on that cornice move  
 Then we sat down there, both of us, each one  
 Turned to the East, whence we began to rise,  
 For in thus looking back is full joy won ,  
 To the low shores I first bent down mine eyes, 55  
 Then raised them to the sun, and saw its rays  
 Smite on us from the left with great surprise  
 And when the Poet saw my puzzled gaze  
 As then I looked upon the sun's bright car,  
 Where 'twixt us and the North it tracked its ways, 60

<sup>37</sup> We read between the lines, and find that the one counsel which human wisdom can give to the soul that is wearied with its upward way is, at any rate not to take one downward step, but to follow the guidance of the higher Reason till a yet higher guide shall come.

<sup>38</sup> A mountain sloping at an angle of 45° presents, it must be admitted, a somewhat serious problem.

<sup>39</sup> Acting on the counsel given, helped by the presence of his Mentor, the pilgrim reaches the first terrace of the Mountain, and there finds a resting-place.

<sup>40</sup> The "*meminisse juvabit*" of *Æn.* i. 203 is stated as a law of man's nature. He who has overcome his first difficulty "thanks God and takes courage." *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*

<sup>57-60</sup> As in *Conv.* iii. 5, Dante delights in imagining the phenomena of the Antipodes beyond the Tropic of Capricorn. There the sun, which we see in the south at noon, would be seen in the north. If the sun had been in Gemini (Castor and Pollux of l. 61), it would be

Then he to me : " If Castor-Pollux star  
 Were now attending yonder mirror clear,  
 Which downward, upward spreads its light afar,  
 Then wouldst thou see, far closer to the Bear,  
 The reddened Zodiac on its circuit wind, 65  
 Unless, perchance, from its old path it veer.  
 How that may be wouldst thou be fain to find,  
 Think thou within thyself how Zion stands,  
 So with this mountain on the earth combined,  
 That each the same horizon-line commands, 70  
 With hemispheres diverse, and so the road,  
 To drive on which unskilled were Phaeton's hands,  
 Thou'lt see how this must on one side be showed,  
 While that upon the other side is seen,  
 If that thy mind its path hath rightly trod " 75  
 " Never, O Master mine," said I, " I ween,  
 Saw I so clearly as I now discern,  
 Where until now my spirit weak hath been,  
 That the mid-circle of the Heavens that turn,  
 Which is in science as Equator known, 80  
 'Twixt winter placed and where the Sun doth burn,  
 For reason which thou tell'st, must hence be thrown  
 Northwards, as far as did the Hebrews old  
 Behold it, stretching to the hotter zone.  
 But if it please thee I would fain be told 85  
 How far our journey ; higher doth the hill  
 Rise than mine eyes can raise them to behold."  
 And he to me : " This Mount is such that still,  
 Beginning from below, 'tis rough and steep,  
 But as one climbs the less he finds it ill. 90

seen still nearer to Ursa Major, &c., farther to the north. We seem, in all these astronomical passages, to see the poet with his globe and astrolabe before him working out his problems. The word "*rubeccus*," in l. 64, is taken by most commentators as = ruddy, by some as = mill wheel, and thus applied to the Zodiac. The "ancient road" is the ecliptic of our globe, representing the sun's apparent course through the signs of the Zodiac.

<sup>65</sup> In the winter of either the northern or southern hemisphere the equator lies between that hemisphere and the path of the ecliptic.

<sup>66</sup> The reading *quando* rather than *quando* gives obviously a closer meaning. What Dante has learnt is not generally that Jerusalem (implied in the "Hebrews") and the Mountain of Purgatory are in different hemispheres, but that the one is precisely the antipodes of the other one, as far south of the equator as the other was north.

<sup>67</sup> The parable here is so plain that he who reads may read. The work of purification is complete when there is no inner conflict which makes it difficult.

Therefore when thou from it such joy shalt reap,  
 As makes thy journey seem as light and smooth  
 As in a boat that down-stream course doth keep,  
 Then shalt thou reach thy pathway's end in sooth,  
 There hope thy panting breath awhile to rest ; 98  
 More I speak not, but this I know is truth."  
 And when he had these wordes on me impressed,  
 A voice not far off cried "But thou, perchance,  
 Shalt have to halt ere that as one distressed."  
 And at that sound we each turned round our glance, 100  
 And saw upon our left a rock rise high  
 Which erst nor he nor I to note did chance ;  
 Thither we drew, and then we saw full nigh  
 A troop of souls behind the great crag's shade,  
 As one who stands still, resting slothfully . 105  
 And one who seemed to me with toil o'erweighed,  
 Was sitting down, his arms around each knee,  
 And low between them was his face down laid ,  
 "O sweet my Lord," I said, "look hère and see,  
 And gaze on him who seems more negligent 110  
 Than if Sloth's self his sister claimed to be."  
 Then he turned to us, gaze upon us bent,  
 Scarce lifting up his face above his thigh,  
 And said . "Mount thou : thy valour is not spent ,"  
 Then knew I who he was , nor then did I, 115  
 Though still that struggle made me panting tread,  
 Allow myself to halt till I drew nigh.  
 When I came near he hardly raised his head,  
 And said "Hast thou seen clearly how the Sun  
 O'er thy left shoulder his bright car hath led ?" 120

98 The warning voice checks the enthusiasm of a too eager climber, who thinks he can press upward without an interval of repose. Is it a friendly or an unfriendly warning? cynical, or simply prudent, like the "rest awhile" of a higher Master? (*Mark* vi 31.) The tone of *Il* 119-127 suggests the former. The slothful man tries to make others like himself, and to magnify the dangers and sufferings of the upward path (*Prov* xxvi 13).

106 The picture is that of a specially Italian form of the *far niente*. Ooe in that attitude was, as it were, the very brother of Sloth.

118 The speaker had overheard the question and answer of *Il* 57-80 with the self-satisfaction of the sluggard, who is content with observing the fact, without either the wonder or the question which form the starting-point of science. Such men may well have vexed the soul of Dante in his geographical or astronomical studies.

His sluggish mien, and words that slow did run,  
 Did move my lips a little to a smile;  
 Then I began: "Belacqua, now I've done  
 Grieving for thee, but tell me why this while  
 Dost thou sit here? Expectest guide or friend? 125  
 Or does thy wonted habit thee beguile?"  
 And he: "What boots it, brother, to ascend,  
 Since there God's angel, sitting at the gate,  
 Would not permit me to my pain to wend?  
 First it behoves that I outside must wait, 130  
 While Heaven moves round the measure of my years,  
 Since my good sighs, delayed long, came too late,  
 Unless, ere that, some prayer a succour bears,  
 Uprising from a heart that lives in grace;  
 What profit others that Heaven never hears?" 135  
 And now the Poet mounted on apace  
 And said, "Come on, thou see'st that now the Sun  
 Is at meridian height, while Night to trace  
 Her pathway o'er Morocco hath begun."

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### CANTO V.

*The Penitents of the last Minute—Buon Conte da Montefeltro—La Pia*

I HAD already parted from that shade,  
 And in my Leader's footsteps followed on,  
 When one behind, who sign with finger made,  
 Shouted "See there, it seems as if there shone  
 No sunshine on the left of him below, 6  
 And seems he moves as doth a living one."  
 Mine eyes I turned on hearing him speak so,  
 And saw them watching with astonishment,  
 Me only, me, and that light's broken glow.

125 Of Belacqua nothing is known beyond the fact that he was a Florentine, and a maker of musical instruments, probably, therefore, a friend of Casella and Dante. His time was spent chiefly at his work, his dinner, his *siesta*. Dante once reproved him for his inactivity, and was met with the answer from Aristotle, "*Sedendo et quiescendo animus afficitur sapiens*" (*Scart., Weg. 90*). He might have added the *dictum* of *Eth. Nicom.* x 7, that happiness consists in leisure (*σχολή*). The picture now drawn might almost be labelled "*Sic sedebat*." It is allowable to trace an association of ideas leading on from Casella (C. u. 61).

"Why is thy mind thus on itself intent?" 10  
 Then said my Master, "that thou'rt slow to walk!  
 What boots it thee what by their whisper's meant?  
 Come on behind me; let the people talk;  
 Be thou like tower that bendeth not its height,  
 And doth the fierce winds of their victory baulk. 15  
 For aye the man in whom thoughts weak and light  
 Spring, each on other, from the goal doth roam,  
 For one still weakens all the other's might."  
 What could I answer more than just "I come!"  
 So spake I, somewhat touched with that same hue, 20  
 Which worthy of forgiveness rendereth some.  
 Meantime along the slope there came in view  
 A tribe that moved in front a little space,  
 And verse by verse sang *Miserere* through.  
 And when they noticed that I gave no place 25  
 Through this my body for the light to go,  
 Their song to one long, hoarse "Oh!" changed apace  
 And two of them as envoys then did show,  
 And ran to meet us, as of us to learn:  
 "Let us, we pray, your state and business know." 30  
 Then said my Master: "Ye may now return,  
 And take back word to those who sent you here,  
 That in this man true flesh they may discern.  
 If they stood still to see his shadow there,  
 As I suppose, enough has now been said, 35  
 Show honour, and more kind will he appear."

13 The words find an echo in the inscription at Marischal College, Aberdeen—THEI SAIE. QUHAT SAIE THEI! LETTE THEM SAIE, which, in its turn, is but a translation from the Greek. In *V* c 14 we have the other side of the poet's character.

18 As elsewhere, Dante's self-scrutiny leads to the discovery of the two elements of the poet's nature: (1) an almost morbid sensitiveness to the criticism of others on what seems to them strange or startling in his acts or words, (2) the scorn of that criticism to which his higher nature, impersonated in Virgil, leads him. The humility of which the rush-girdle was the symbol (*C* i 94) was with him, as with St. Paul, compatible with a profound ultimate indifference to man's judgment (*1 Cor* iv 3). One can almost fancy that the lines were written after he had seen men pointing at him in the streets of Verona, and heard them whispering, "There goes the man who has been in Hell." The simile of the tower is as an echo from *Æn* x 692-694. Line 16 expresses the result of an induction wider than the self-scrutiny. The man who cannot hold out against what people say, against the vexing thoughts to which their words give rise, loses all energy and consistency of character. One notes the conscious blush with which Virgil's reproof is accepted, the discernment also which recognises that such a blush does not always make a man worthy of the pardon of his fault, but that this depends on the nature of the fault and the character of the offender.

24 The *Miserere*, Ps. li. Dante had felt, as thousands before and after him have felt, that that Psalm struck the keynote of all true penitence and purification.

26 In Hell the poet's work, on his return to earth, was limited to reviving the fame (*H* xv 119), or, at farthest, vindicating the character (*H* xiii 33; xxxii 138) of the souls with whom

Ne'er in my sight have fiery vapours sped  
     In early eve to cleave the blue serene,  
     Or clouds of August in the sunset red,  
 More quick than they anon to turn were seen ; 40  
     And turning so, when they the others met,  
     They wheeled on us, like squadron without rein.  
 "The folk that press us form a throng close set,"  
     The Poet said, "and they imploring come ;  
     So still go onward, onward, listening yet." 45  
 "O soul that tak'st thy way to blessed home,  
     With limbs the same as those thy mother bore,"  
     Shouting they came, "stay here, and look if some  
 Among us thou hast ever seen before,  
     That news of him to yon world thou mayst bear ; 50  
     Ah ! why dost go ! Why haltest thou no more !  
 We all a death of violence did share,  
     And sinners were, e'en to our latest hour ;  
     Then light from Heaven made our vision clear ,  
 So by repentance and love's pardoning power 55  
     We passed from life as reconciled to God,  
     On Whom to gaze strong yearnings us devour."  
 And I, "Though every face to me is showed,  
     Yet recognise I none ; but if aught please  
     That I can do, O spirits born for good, 60  
 Tell me, and I will do it, by that peace,  
     Which makes me, following such a Guide as this,  
     Seek it from world to world and never cease."  
 And one began , "Each one full certain is  
     Of thy good will, though oaths of thine were none, 65  
     Unless thy will through want of power shall miss,

he came in contact Here he can do more by asking their friends on earth to pray for their growth in holiness, and therefore for their peace

<sup>37</sup> Partly an echo of Virg. *Georg.* i. 365-367, but embodying also (1) the medieval theory of the origin of shooting stars (*Pres.* ii. 33), and (2) the well-known fact that August is the month in which they most frequently appear. Milt. *P.* L. iv. 536 may be compared, as describing the same phenomena. "Clouds of August" are in the objective case.

<sup>38</sup> The leaning of the poet to the larger hope (*Par.* xix. 70-114, xx. 94-135) appears in the prominence given to the power of penitence, even *in articulo mortis*, with no priestly absolution, no recorded confession, under least favourable conditions, to win the pardoning grace of God. He would have taught, as Latimer and Pusey did, that there was time for that repentance between the uplifting of the headsman's axe and the fatal stroke.

<sup>39</sup> Comp. J. H. Newman, *Dream of Gerontius*. "Thou wilt be sick with love, and yearn for Him" (*p.* 355, ed. 1883).

Whence I, who speak before the rest alone,  
 Pray thee, if ever thou that land dost see  
 'Twixt Charles's kingdom and Romagna thrown,  
 That thou wouldst ask of thy great courtesy 70  
 That Fano's prayers may be on me bestowed,  
 That I may purge my grave iniquity.  
 Thence sprang I, but the deep wounds, whence there flowed  
 The blood wherein of old I dwelt secure,  
 Were given in land by Antenori trod, 75  
 There where I dreamed my safety was most sure :  
 'Twas he of Este had it done, whose spite  
 Went far beyond what justice could endure.  
 But had I towards Mira taken flight,  
 When I o'erta'en at Orsico stood, 80  
 I still had breathed in yonder world of light.  
 I to the marshes ran, where reeds and mud  
 So tangled me that I fell there, and saw  
 Upon the ground a pool of mine own blood."  
 Then said another, "That which thee doth draw 85  
 Be thine, the wish to mount this lofty hill,  
 So thou help mine by love's all-pitying law !  
 Of Montefeltro once, Buonconte still .  
 Nor others, nor Giovanna, for me care.  
 Hence as I walk sad looks tell tale of ill " 90

<sup>67</sup> The first speaker is Jacopo del Cassero of Fano, in the March of Ancona, between Romagna and the kingdom of Naples, then (in 1300) under Charles of Anjou. His family were of honourable fame from the tenth century onward. Jacopo himself was an ally of the Florentine Guelphs against Arezzo in 1283, was Podestà of Bologna in 1296, and in 1298 was invited by Matteo Visconti to act as Podestà of Milan. On his way thither he was assassinated near Padua by the emissaries of Azzo VIII, Marquis of Este, Malatesta of Rimini being suspected of some share in the murder. His tomb, with a long Latin inscription, is in the Church of S. Domenico in Fano. It describes him as the "*dux et salus patrie*," and ends with invoking the prayers of the Virgin for his soul. "*Thelococ igitur ut regnet minime desit*." That last line may have suggested Dante's treatment of the facts. Jacopo was said to have provoked Azzo by having spoken of him as a traitor and a coward.

<sup>75</sup> The local tradition that Padua was founded by Antenori (his grave is still shown and there is a *Cappella Antenori*, *Amp* 331) is a sufficient explanation of the term. Remembering, however, Dante's associations with the name Antenori (*H* xxxii 88), its use here was probably intended to be suggestive of the complicity of the Paduans in Azzo's guilt.

<sup>79</sup> Mira and Orsico both lie in the country between Padua and Venice. Jacopo fled to the latter, found himself entangled in the marshy swamps, and bled to death.

<sup>80</sup> The Buonconte who speaks was the son of the Guido da Montefeltro whose tale is told in *H*. xxvii 67-136. He commanded the forces of the Aretines in the battle of Campaldino (1289), in which Dante, Vieri dei Cerchi, Corso Donati, Guido Cavalcanti, and the brother of Francesca of Rimini had taken part (*Vil* vii 13). All that was known of his fate was that his body was never found. Out of that single fact, and the indifference shown to his memory by his widow (*I* 89), Dante constructs the tale of infinite sadness that follows, all the more notable because its hero had fought on the opposite side to his. Here the soul knows that as yet no prayers are offered for him on earth, not even by his Giovanna.

And I to him · "What force or chance did bear  
 Thee so far off from Campaldino's plain,  
 That thou wast buried, no man knowing where?"  
 "At Casentino's foot," said he again,  
 "There flows a stream as Archiano known, 94  
 Which from the Apennine convent seeks the main.  
 There, where it drops the name it once did own,  
 I came, my throat with many a wound pierced through,  
 On foot, and all the plain was blood-bestrown.  
 There my sight failed, and with it utterance too 100  
 Ceased with the name of Mary; and I fell,  
 And my corpse lifeless lay exposed to view.  
 Truth will I speak; do thou the living tell,  
 God's angel took me, and Hell's loudly cried,  
 'Why robb'st thou me, thou, who in Heaven dost dwell?' 105  
 Thou bear'st the part that ever shall abide,  
 For one poor tear that cheats me of my prize;  
 The rest shall by another doom be tried.'  
 Thou knowest well how in the air doth rise  
 That humid vapour which in raindrops breaks, 110  
 Soon as it mounts where cold pervades the skies.  
 Then came that Evil Will who evil seeks,  
 That only, with his mind, and with the power  
 His nature gives him, moves the windy reeks;  
 And so the valley, at day's closing hour, 115  
 From Pratomagno to the mountain-chain,  
 He veiled with cloud, and made the heaven to lower,  
 So that the pregnant air condensed to rain.  
 The showers fell fast, and to the gullies came  
 So much of them as earth could not contain, 120

He begins by narrating his flight from the battle field to the Casentino (*H* xxx 65), or upper valley of the Arno. The Archiano is a torrent stream that flows from the Apennines above the monastery (strictly hermitage) of Camaldoli, founded by S. Romuald of Ravenna in 1012 (*Par* xxii 49). Buonconte reached the stream where it flows into the Arno, sank exhausted, his last utterance being a cry to her on whom he looked as Our Lady, Mother of Compassion. The scene that follows reminds us, in part, of the tale of Montefeltro's father in *H* xxvii 112, in part, also, of the tradition as to the body of Moses in *Jude* v. 9. Here the demon, defrauded of the soul, wreaks his vengeance on the body. As in legends without end (the belief surviving in the modern "typhoon"), the storm that follows, though natural forces are employed, is traced to the demon's power as its cause. Pratomagno was on the left bank of the Arno, not far from Arezzo. The streams were swolled with the rain, the Archiano, into which the wounded man fell, bore him into the Arno. He sought, in the double agony of soul and body, to express his faith in the Crucified One by placing his arms cross-wise on his breast.



And, as with torrents strong they one became,  
 Towards the kingly river on they passed  
 So quickly that no force their strength could tame.  
 My frozen body near its mouth at last  
 The raging Archian found and drove amain 125  
 I' the Arno, and set loose the cross which fast  
 I o'er my breast made, when I bowed to pain :  
 It rolled me on its banks and in its bed ,  
 Then girt and hid me with its stolen gain."  
 "Ah! when thou back unto the world shalt tread 130  
 And hast found rest from thy long pilgrimage,"  
 So a thurd spirit, in due order, said,  
 "Let me, La Pia, then thy thoughts engage .  
 Siena gave me life, Maremma slew  
 He knows it, who, with ring of marriage, 135  
 Made me, espoused before, wear jewel new "

### CANTO VI.

*The Crowd of the wailing Ones—Their Prayer for Prayers—Sordello of  
 Mantua—Lamentations over Italy*

WHEN game of *Zara* cometh to an end,  
 The loser stays behind in sorrowing mood :  
 Goes o'er his throws again, and fain would mend ;  
 Off with the other moveth all the crowd,  
 One walks before, one closely clings behind, 5  
 And, at his side, of notice one is proud.

<sup>125</sup> The Pia was a lady of Sienna, of the house of the Guastelloni. Her first husband was Baldo dei Tolomei, by whom she had two sons. She was left a widow in 1290, and documents are extant in which she gives an account of the property she held for them. Her second husband, Paganello, had a castle in the Maremma, to which he took her, and where she disappeared, no one knowing how. The early commentators conjecture that she was thrown from a window of the castle into a deep gorge below. Later guesses suggest that the husband coolly watched her decay as she sank under the local miasma (*H* xxix 48)—(*Scart*). Lately, however (*Acad* Juoe 19, 1886), a Sennese scholar, Banchi, has announced that his researches have brought to light a very different story, the Pia dei Tolomei having died in 1318. For this, however, we have to wait.

<sup>126</sup> I adopt the reading "*disposata*," referring the *manellata* to the first marriage. One notes here also the bitterness of the feeling that there are none praying for her soul on earth—that he to whom she speaks is the only one from whom she can look for prayers.

<sup>1</sup> The game of *sara* (= zero, the term being applied to certain unlucky throws) was played with three dice. The rules of its game we may well pass over. What we note is the vivid picture of Italian mediæval life which the lines bring before us. The game is played in

He pauses not, this friend or that doth mind,  
 And he who gets his hand no more doth press ;  
 Thus through the throng his safe way he doth wind.  
 So was I in the midst of that crowd's stress, 10  
 Turning to them, now here, now there, my face,  
 And from them freed myself by promises.  
 One I saw there, an Aretime in race,  
 Whom the fierce arm of Ghin di Tacco slew,  
 And one who perished drowning, in the chase. 15  
 Near me, with outstretched hands entreating, drew  
 Frederic Novello, and the Pisan youth  
 Who made Marzucco show his greatness true.  
 I saw Count Orso, him too who, in sooth,  
 Through envy and fierce hatred, lost his life, 20  
 And not for guilty deed ; so spake he truth ;  
 Pierre de la Brosse I mean, and let the wife  
 Of Brabant, let her now on earth take heed  
 Lest she should join a herd with worse ills rife.

public, the loser goes over the game again in his thoughts that he may profit by his blunders, the bystanders crowd round the winner, hoping for a share in his winnings. So, Dante says, was he. The souls of those who had been cut off in the blossom of their sins found in him so ready a sympathy that they crowded round him, each seeking to tell his own sad tale of woe, each asking for the alms of prayer.

<sup>13</sup> The Aretime was Benincasa da Laterina, who had studied civil law with Accornero (*H* xv 110) at Bologna, and was made judge at Arezzo. In that character he condemned to death two relations of Ghino di Tacco, who led a robber-life in the Maremma, and Ghino, in revenge, stabbed him as he was sitting on his judgment-seat in Rome. Ghino himself had taken possession of the Pope's castle at Radicofani, and led the same kind of life there, not without occasional touches of Robin Hood-like humour or pity towards his victims, of which anecdotes are told not essential to our understanding Dante. He was of Siennese origin, and belonged to the noble family of the Pecorelli da Tuiria. According to one account, he was afterwards reconciled to Boniface VIII, made a Knight of St. John, and given the post of Prior in one of their hospitals. The last fact may, in part, account for the prominence which Dante gives to his crime (*Benw*).

<sup>15</sup> The other Aretime is identified with a Lupo or Ciacco, who is said to have been drowned in the Arno as he fled from the field of battle, Bibbiena, Montaperti, or Campaldino being conjecturally named as the scene of action.

<sup>17</sup> Frederic Novello was, as the name indicates, the son of one of the Casentino counts of that name (his father was a Ghibelline and Imperial Vicar in Tuscany), said to have died in battle in 1280, but nothing more is known of him. Dante, who knew the family well, may have named him by way of comfort to those who mourned his loss. He had seen in him the germs of a possible repentance. As to "him of Pisa," we have little beyond conjectures built upon the text. The nearest approach to a coherent story is that Giovanni, son of Marzucco Scornigiani of Pisa, was put to death by Ugholino, that the father then, calmly and without reproaches, represented to the tyrant that it would be to his honour to allow the body to be buried, and that Ugholino yielded to his importunity. The father afterwards (1286) entered the Franciscan Order (or perhaps the *Frati Gaudenti—Phil*), and a sonnet addressed to him by Guittone of Arezzo is still extant. The two last facts may probably have interested Dante in the history.

<sup>19</sup> Of Count Orso we know even less than of Marzucco. The only conjecture worth noticing, as presenting a point of contact with another part of the *Comedy*, is that which reports him to have belonged to the Ghibelline family of the Alberti, and to have been murdered by his cousin the Count Alberto of Mangona (*H*, xxxix. 57).

<sup>20</sup> In Pierre de la Brosse of Paris we come within the range of a better known history. He was a surgeon in the court of Philip the Bold of France, and on the death of Louis, the King's eldest son by his first wife, accused his second wife, Mary, daughter of the Duke of

As soon as I from all those souls was freed, 25  
     Who only prayed that others for them pray,  
     That they might holier grow with greater speed,  
 Then I began : " It seems that thou dost say,  
     O my true Light, in text express and plain,  
     That to no prayer doth Heaven's decree give way ; 30  
 And yet this tribe is eager prayers to gain  
     Shall then their hope be proved a thing of nought ?  
     Or do thy words thought unrevealed contain ?"  
 And he to me : " My text is clearly taught , 35  
     And yet that hope of theirs leads not astray,  
     If to discernment reason sound be brought  
 For height of justice doth not fall away,  
     Because love's fire doth in an hour complete  
     The debt which he who dwells here needs must pay.  
 And there, where I of this same point did treat, 40  
     Default was not amended aught by prayer,  
     Because the prayer no grace from God did meet  
 But in a question rousing such deep care,  
     Decide not till She tells it all to thee,  
     Who light 'twixt truth and intellect shall bear 45  
 I know not if thou understandest me ;  
     I speak of Beatrice , her, o' the height  
     Above, all blest and smiling, thou shalt see."

Brabant, of having poisoned him. The charge was dismissed, and, according to one story, the Queen revenged herself by charging him with a treasonable correspondence with Alphonso X. of Castile, with whom Philip was at war, or (the acc. units differ) with an attempt on her own honour. The King believed the charge and Pierre was put to death. The Lady of Brabant did not die till 1321 (the year of Dante's own death), and may therefore have heard of the promise thus given to her name. Dante had probably been interested in the story during his stay at Paris (*Par.* x. 136), and may have seen in it, as in the fate of Peter de Vineſ, an example of the malignant power of envy. Some commentators less accurately represent Pierre de la Brosse as having been put to death by Philip the Fair, soo of the Bold.

28 The eagerness of the souls in Purgatory for the prayers of their friends on earth reminds Dante of the Sibyl's answer to Palinurus when he sought to pass Acheron before the appointed time (*Æn.* vi. 376)—

" *Desine fata Deum flecti sperare precando* "

Virgil's answer, given from the standpoint of the wider knowledge which death had opened to him, is on the basis of Augustine's rule "*Distingue tempora et concordantur scripturae*." The prayers of Palinurus and of Æneas were without the grace of God. When a Christian prays fervently for the soul of one whom he has loved, that fervent charity is accepted by the Divine Justice as a satisfaction, and so the prayer can be granted without any abatement of the strict law of retribution. To the teaching of the Schoolmen it did not matter whether the satisfaction was given by the sinner himself or by others on his behalf (*Aquinas Summ. iii., Suppl.* 13. 2, 83. 1-6). Virgil, the representative of human wisdom, speaks, however, as with a conscious diffidence. The true solution of all such questions must come from Beatrice, as the representative of Theology, the *scientia scientiarum*, Divine Wisdom in its highest aspects.

And I: "Good Leader, speed we on our flight,  
 For I am now not tired as heretofore ; 50  
 And see, the hill casts shadows in our sight."  
 "We," answered he, "with this day shall explore  
 As far as we are able, but this learn,  
 The fact is other than thy thoughts brood o'er  
 Ere thou the height shalt gain, thou'lt see him turn, 55  
 Who now behind the hill from sight is flown,  
 That we no more his broken rays discern.  
 But see thou there a soul that all alone,  
 With fixed gaze, towards us turns his eye,  
 He will to us the quickest way make known." 60  
 We came to him. O soul from Lombardy !  
 How stood'st thou there in thy disdainful pride,  
 With glances slowly turned and nobly shy !  
 He spake to us no word, but turned aside,  
 And let us go, with look upon us bent, 65  
 Like lion, when he couching doth abide.

<sup>49</sup> The poet's steps are quickened, it would seem, by the very syllables of Beatrice's name. Why should they not press on at once? Beneath that symbol there lies the wish to represent a fact which Dante may have himself experienced—the haste of the soul, its impatience of delay in the work of purification. It has to be taught by human wisdom that the work is slower and more difficult than it imagines. Returning to the outward story, we note the fact that the ascent of the Mountain begins on Easter Monday and is not completed till the Thursday following. See note 60 C ii r.

<sup>50</sup> The lofty Lombard soul who stands, lion-like, all alone, like Saladin (*J'* iv 179), is, as L. 74 shows, Sordello of Mantua. Dante's profound reverence for him has immortalised his name. Browning has sought to make "Sordello's story," as told by himself, familiar to the English reader. As it is, however, that story is still shrouded in doubtful guesses and traditions, and I follow Faunel (i 504) and Scart., with some reserve, in summing up a nett result. Born *circa* 1200-1210 at Gouto, endowed, as Browning paints him, with the gifts of beauty and genius, Sordello's youth was passed under the care of the Patriarch of Aquileia, he was received as a poet (?) at the court of Richard, Count of San Bonifazio, and assisted his wife, Cunizza, daughter of Ezzelino da Romano (*H* xii 110, *Par* ix 29-64), to escape to her father's court. The fascination which she exercised over him led to a criminal intrigue, which was detected by Ezzelino and ended in Sordello's banishment. He wandered through Italy from court to court, till in 1245 he arrived in Provence, and was honourably received by the Countess, Beatrice, daughter of Raymond Berenger III, the last Count of Provence, and wife of Charles of Anjou, the brother of St. Louis the murderer of Conradin. After the manner of Provençal troubadours, Sordello chose Beatrice as the ideal object of his love, and had some position as a knight in her father's household. From 1248-51 Charles was absent in Egypt accompanying his brother in his crusade, and during that time Sordello appears to have paid visits to the courts of Castile and Arragon. For some years after this we lose all trace of him, but for a moment, in 1266, we have at least one authentic fact: Charles was entering on his expedition against Manfred, and a letter is extant addressed to him by Clement IV. in 1266. The Pope reproves him for his want of kindness and liberality in his treatment of the Provençals, whom he had persuaded to join to him the expedition, and, among other instances, names Sordello. "He, your own knight, is languishing in Novara, Sordello, who ought to be rewarded for his own sake, and yet more for his services." A short poem of Sordello's, complaining of the double pressure of poverty and illness, and an answer from Charles of Anjou, "Sordello speaks evil of me, and he ought not so to speak, for I have always loved and honoured him. I have given him a wife as he desired, but he is unjust, exacting, strange, and if one gave him a county" (title and property) "he would not be grateful," probably belong to this period. Beyond this all is hazy, whether he followed Charles to Naples or returned to Provence, or, now that Ezzelino and the Count of San Bonifazio were dead, found that he could live safely in or near Mantua, is simply guess-work.

Still near to him Virgilius drew, intent  
 To beg that he would point the speediest way,  
 And he to that request no answer sent.  
 But of our country and our life did pray 70  
 Fully to know. And my sweet Guide began :  
 "In Mantua;" then from where he erst did stay,  
 All self-absorbed, full quick to him he ran,  
 Saying, as each the other clasped, "See here  
 Sordello, of thy land, O Mantuan." 75  
 Ah, base Italia, home of grief and fear,  
 Ship without pilot, where the storm blows shrill,  
 No queen of kingdoms, but a harlots' lair!

The place which Dante assigns to him implies that he had died a violent death (date unknown), not without repentance, but without time for the "satisfactio" of a completed penitence. These scanty records fail to show what it was that led Dante to make so much of Sordello's memory, and to place him almost on the same level with his beloved Statius. We, at all events, cannot measure the poet's judgment by our ignorance. Sordello, as being both an Italian and a Provençal poet, may have played an important part in his mental growth. Words of his may have struck root and grown and borne fruit in Dante's spirit. A trace of this influence appears in the *V. E.* 1. 15, in which the Florentine speaks of Sordello as "a man of great eloquence, not only in poetry, but in every form of utterance." Even the accidents of his life, that he was a fellow-citizen of Virgil's, and that he loved an ideal Beatrice, may not have been without some influence. But, beyond all this, he may have known more of the man than we do, may have seen, as Browning has taught us to see, how the life had failed to fulfil its early promise, "the poet thwarting hopelessly the man," may have conceived for himself what "the complete Sordello, man and bard," might have become under happier conditions, and have resolved that it should be his work to exhibit that ideal to after ages in the new Sordello of the Mount of Purification, and so to repay whatever debt of gratitude he owed to the earlier poet. It remains only to note (1) that an trustworthy tradition represents *Esclm* as giving his sister Beatrice in marriage to Sordello, and (2) that one historian (Eméric David, *Hist. Litt. de la France*, xxi. 450) identifies Dante's Sordello, not with the Provençal poet, but with a Podesta and Captain General of Mantua of that name, who governed with all justice and equity, and who died in 1280, while (3) another (Millet, *Hist. Litt. des Troubadours*, n. 80) cuts the knot by assuming the identity of the poet and the Podesta. We must be content to leave Sordello's story told as I have endeavoured to tell it. (See Tiraboschi, *Storia della Lett. Ital.* iv. 360, Fauriel, i. 504 et seq., *Scart.*) It may, however, be worth while, as accounting for the reverence with which Dante obviously looks on Sordello, to note further that there may have been some points of contact through which some authentic traditions of the Mantuan may have come to the Florentine poet, such as, e.g., the friendship of the latter with Charles Martel, grandson of the Beatrice of Provence, to whom Sordello gave the homage of a courtier-poet, and the fact that Cunizza, who had been Sordello's mistress, ended her days at Florence, probably in the house of Cavalcante dei Cavalcanti (*H.* x. 53), the father of Dante's friend, Guido. Comp. notes on *Par.* ix. 32. Browning, I need scarcely say, gives a very different history, but unfortunately without references or *fiducias justificantes*. For further information see "Sordello," by Count G. B. d'Arco, Cremona, 1783, who speaks of him as the poet who raised the erotic tone of Provençal poetry to that of a noble and reverential love (p. 36), states that he wrote a *Tesoro de' Tesori*, treating of ethics and politics (p. 53), translated Cæsar and Quintus Curtius, and was thus a fit guide for Dante's pilgrimage to the valley of the kings. Raynour (*Hist. des Troub.* ii. p. lvi.) quotes a poem by Sordello on the death of the Chevalier Blacas, which includes a sharp rebuke of the vices of princes, like that which Dante puts into his lips in this Canto. See also Diez, *Troub.* 465-481. Dates of birth and death are uncertain, but his appearance in Provence may be fixed as *circa* 1227-29, and death as *circa* 1280.

<sup>70</sup> It is noteworthy, in any case, that the introduction of Sordello coincides with Dante's first direct burst of prophetic utterance on the state of Italy. He sees in the freedom in which the Guelphs exulted as the result of their triumph over the Empire (the passage may have been written after Henry VII's accession), what was really the basest bondage. In language that echoes that of the Old Testament prophets, the "lady of kingdoms" (*Isa.* xlvii. 5) has become a harlot, has sold herself to the Papacy and to France, forsaking her true lord, the Emperor. The bond of citizenship which drew Sordello to Virgil has given way to ceaseless wars and factions within the same walls. In "the ship without a pilot" we have a *replica* from *Mon.* i. 16, *Conv.* iv. 4.

That noble soul showed this quick eager will,  
 At the sweet name of his dear fatherland, 80  
 His countryman with gladsome joy to fill,  
 And now in thee the living never stand  
 From conflict free, and one the other tears,  
 Of those within one wall's, one rampart's, band.  
 Search round thy coasts, O thou of many cares, 85  
 Washed by the sea; then look within thy breast,  
 If any part in peaceful gladness shares.  
 What boots it that Justinian did his best  
 The rein to mend, if saddle empty be?  
 Without it thou would'st be less shame-oppress 90  
 Ah, race that should'st be given to piety,  
 And let the Cæsar in his saddle sit,  
 If well thou hearest what God teacheth thee,  
 Look how this beast grows wild in frenzy's fit,  
 Seeing that no spurs are there its course to guide, 95  
 Since erst the curb did feel thy hand on it.  
 O Teuton Albert, who dost turn aside  
 From her that fierce and wild her way doth wend,  
 And oughtest on her saddle-bow to ride;  
 May a just judgment from the stars descend 100  
 Upon thy blood, and be it clear and new,  
 That thy successor fear as dread an end!  
 Since thou hast suffered, and thy father too,  
 Distracted by the greed of distant lands,  
 The Empire's garden to his waste to view. 105

<sup>85</sup> The shores are those of the Adnatic and Tyrrhenian seas, including the whole extent of Italy.

<sup>88</sup> Justinian appears, as in *Par. vi. 19*, as the ideal lawgiver and emperor. Law was to have been the bridle that curbed the passions of the people, but the saddle was empty, the imperial throne, when the Emperor was not in Italy, was as good as vacant.

<sup>94</sup> The words may be taken as addressed either (1) to the Papal Curia in its usurped dominion, as having rashly undertaken the task of civil government (in continuation of the previous triplet), or (2) as part of the address to Albert. (1) seems preferable.

<sup>97</sup> Albert, son of Rodolph of Hapsburg, was elected Emperor in 1298, and murdered by his cousin, John of Suabia, in 1308. We thus get a probable date—*circa* 1308-9—for the prophetic utterance (prophetic after the event) now before us. Albert is addressed in the present tense, and rebuked for not visiting Italy, from the assumed date of the poem; but ll. 101, 102, clearly point to the manner of his death, and are intended as a hint either to Henry VII. or his successor. The English reader will remember that the death of Albert synchronised with the confederation of the Swiss cantons, popularly associated with the name of William Tell (1307). Comp. *Ltze*, c. vii.

<sup>105</sup> Rodolph also had failed, from Dante's standpoint, to discharge the duties of an Emperor towards Italy (*C. vii. 94*). The Canto was probably written after Henry VII.'s election.

See the Montecchi, Cappelletti stand,  
 Monaldi, Filippeschi, reckless one,  
 Those sad already, these suspicion-banned ;  
 Come, cruel one, yea, come, to thee be shown  
 Thy people's woes, and heal the wounds that ail, 110  
 And see how safe Santafiore's grown !  
 Yea, come and see thy Rome that still doth wail,  
 Widowed, alone, and day and night laments ,  
 " My Cæsar, why dost thou to help me fail ?"  
 Yea, come, and see how love her tribes cements ; 115  
 And if no pity for us thine heart move,  
 Let fear of shame stir up thy soul's intents !  
 And—if the name be lawful—our great Jove,  
 Who, on the earth for us wast crucified,  
 Have Thy just eyes withdrawn their light above ? 120  
 Or dost Thou, in thy wisdom's depth, provide,  
 And pave the way for some great good unseen,  
 Which Thou from our perception still dost hide ?  
 For all Italia's regions filled have been  
 With tyrants, and each churl, on faction bent, 125  
 Comes as a new Marcellus on the scene !

<sup>106</sup> Some commentators have connected one or both of the names with Cremona, but there seems no reason to question their identity with the Montagna and Capulets of Shakespeare. Both the families were Ghibellines, but had drifted into mutual hostility through the absence of the Emperor's guiding hand. The story of Romeo and Juliet is fixed by local tradition in 1313, when Can Grande was Lord of Verona. Dante may have known them (Knight's *Shakespeare* t. 8). Did Juliet remind him of Beatrice?

<sup>107</sup> Of the two families, Monaldi or Minnaldeschi, are mentioned in *Vill.* vii. 15 as being at Orvieto when it was visited by Henry VII. The Filippeschi were Ghibellines, and expelled their rivals, who were Guelfs. The Verona factious had apparently borne their evil fruit more rapidly than those of Orvieto.

<sup>111</sup> The Counts of Santafiore had their castle in the Maremma. In 1299 and 1300 they were attacked and their land ravaged by the Siennese. The tone of the line is obviously intensely ironical, as also is that of l. 115. Comp. C. xi. 58.

<sup>113</sup> As before the words addressed to Albert are meant for his successor. The flight of the Pope and the Curia to the Babylonian exile of Avignon had left Rome more desolate than ever. She was, in very deed, a widowed city waiting for the arrival of her true lord, the Emperor (*Lam.* i. 1).

<sup>116</sup> The transfer of the Divine Name from classical Latin to the language of Christian thought was clearly not felt to be irreverent, scarcely perhaps even startling, either by Dante or Petrarch, who uses "Jove" in like manner. So Milton (*Ode on Aust.*) speaks of Christ as "the mighty Pan," and Young's *Night Thoughts* give "O thou great Jove unfeigned" (*N and Q* 3d Ser. x. 197). Our pronunciation of Jehovah as a Divine Name, to which some have looked as explaining the transfer, was unknown in the Middle Ages, and is said to have been first used by Goliatus, confessor to Leo X. (*Di. Axi. Cath. I. erit* ii. 10, in *Scart.*) On the other hand, Dante's Hebrew studies, elementary as they were, may have led to his being acquainted with it (Witte, *D. F.* i. 43, *Paur* in *D. Gesell* in 473-462). The prayer coupled with the name is in the very language and tone of the Old Testament (*Isai* i. 15, *Deut* xxxi. 17, xxxii. 30). All seems dark but the poet prophet (not without another side-glance at Henry of Luxemburg) will yet believe that all is working for good.

<sup>120</sup> The Marcellus has been identified (1) with the conqueror of Syracuse, (2) with the Consul C. Marcellus, who joined Pompeius against Cæsar, and is therefore compared with the

Thou, O my Florence, mayst be well content  
 With this digression, which is nought to thee,  
 Thanks to thy people, wise in argument.  
 Many with justice in their hearts we see 130  
 Linger, lest unadvised they draw the bow,  
 Thy people hath it on the tongue's tip free.  
 Many to bear the common charge are slow,  
 But thy good anxious people, though none call,  
 Are heard to cry, "The yoke I'll undergo" 135  
 Rejoice thee now, thou hast the wherewithal,  
 Rich art thou, thine is peace, and thou art wise!  
 If true my words, facts will not hide at all.  
 Athens and Lacedæmon, whence did rise  
 The laws of old, on civil order bent, 140  
 Took but short step to where life's true good lies,  
 Compared with thee, so subtly provident  
 Of wise reforms, that, half November gone,  
 Nought lingers that was for October meant.  
 How often, in the times to memory known, 145  
 Hast thou changed laws, coins, polity and right,  
 And altered all thy members one by one!  
 And if thou well reflect, and see the light,  
 Thou shalt behold thyself as woman sick,  
 Who on her pillow finds no rest at night, 150  
 And seeks to ease her pain by turning quick

Guelph demagogues who resisted the Empire. It seems, however, more probable that Dante has in his mind the son of the last-named Marcellus and of Octavia, the sister of Augustus, who died young and whose name has been immortalised as one who might have been the ideal saviour of his country (*Æn* vi 884). The quotation of the rest of the line, "*Manibus date hinc plenis*," in C. xxx 21, shows that the poet's memory was haunted by the whole passage. This assumes, of course, that the name is used with the same keen irony as runs through the lines that follow.

137 The irony becomes yet keener. From Dante's standpoint, as in his *Epistle to Henry VIII*, Florence was conspicuous above all cities for its political vices. There was the fox's den, there the tainted sheep that infected the whole flock. Others with good intent might work slowly. Florence was always, at any moment, quick to talk of justice. Others might shrink from the burden of office. Every citizen of Florence was eager for that burden. What most offended the conservative legal mind of Dante were the constant changes of government. All this presented a painful contrast to his ideal of the unity and permanence of law under a righteous emperor. In l. 143 there is perhaps a special allusion to the deposition, in November 1302 (?) by Charles of Valois, of the Priori who had been appointed on October 15, and ought to have remained in office till the middle of December (*Vill* viii 49).

146 Scart enumerates no less than twenty political changes between 1243 and 1307, including alternating expulsions of Ghibellines and Guelphs (*H* x 46-81), the formation of the Guilds of Arts with political privileges, the Council of the fourteen Buonomini, of the Priori of the Guilds, the Gonfaloniere and Ordinances of Justice, introduced by Gian della Bella, the expulsion of that leader, and the like (*Vill* vi-viii). What was all this but as the restless tossing to and fro of a woman in a fever? For the changes of coin, see *Vill* ix 74, xii 97.



## CANTO VII.

*Sordello's Guidance—The Valley of fair Colours and sweet Odours—The  
Rulers, Rodolph and others—Henry III of England*

AFTER those greetings good, given joyfully,  
 Had thrice, yea, four times, further been renewed,  
 Sordello drew back, and said, "Who are ye?"  
 "Ere yet this mountain's height the souls had viewed,  
 That were deemed worthy sight of God to win, 5  
 My bones found burial from Octavian good  
 Virgil am I, and for no other sin  
 Than that I lacked true faith did I lose Heaven"  
 So did my Guide his answer then begin.  
 As one to whom some strange new sight is given, 10  
 At which he looks in blank astonishment,  
 'Twixt faith and doubt, "it is," "it is not," driven,  
 So did he seem, and then his brow he bent,  
 And turned to him with humble reverence  
 And clasped him as on homage due intent 15  
 "O glory of the Latins," said he, "whence  
 Was shown the might of what our speech could do,  
 Source of my native land's pre-eminence,  
 What grace or merit brings thee to my view?  
 If I to hear thy words am worthy found, 20  
 Say if from Hell thou com'st, and what purheu."

<sup>1</sup> The narrative, which had been interrupted by the long diatribe against Florence, takes up the thread of C. vi 75

<sup>6</sup> Octavio is, of course, the Emperor Augustus (*H* 1 71)

<sup>8</sup> The absence of faith, even more than that of baptism, excluded the righteous heathen from the full salvation revealed in Christ. So P. Lombard (*Sent* iii 25) and Aquinas (*Summ.* ii qu. 76, 1), and Dante did not dare to question it, though the frequency with which he dwells on it shows how it vexed his soul, and led him in *II* iv and here (*ll* 15-36) to seek for every possible mitigation of the dogma. See also *Par.* xix 70-96, xx 87-138

<sup>11</sup> Sordello is so absorbed in the joy of meeting Virgil that he asks no question as to his companion, and does not notice that he is a living man till C. viii 58.

<sup>17</sup> The Lombard Provençal poet does not cease to feel that he too has a share in the Latin which Virgil wrote, and of which he had shown the capacities for the highest poetry. Did Dante, as he wrote the line, feel that this was precisely what he was doing for the new Latin in which he wrote?

<sup>21</sup> A *v* 1, "or" for "and," is adopted by many editors, but Sordello could hardly be supposed to think that there were other abodes for souls than Hell, Purgatory, and Paradise. The question is, of course, equivalent to = "From what circle or what *bolgia*?"

"Throughout the dolorous kingdom's every round,"  
 He answered, "have I on my journey come :  
 By power from Heaven led on I tread this ground  
 Not what I did, but did not, brought the doom 25  
 To lose the sight of that bright Sun on high  
 Thou seekest, which too late did me illumine.  
 A place there is of no sharp agony,  
 But of dark shadows only, where lament  
 Sounds not like wail of woe, but as a sigh , 30  
 There dwell I with young children innocent,  
 Whom Death's sharp teeth have snatched ere yet they were  
 Freed from the sin which with our birth is blent,  
 There stay I with the souls that had no share  
 In the three saintly graces, yet, unstained 35  
 By vice, all other virtues fair would wear ,  
 But if thou hast the power and knowledge gained,  
 Give us some hint how we may sooner reach  
 Where Purgatory's true gate is attained."  
 He answered " No fixed bound is given to each 40  
 'Tis free to me to go around, above  
 Far as I can, I thee will guide and teach  
 But see how day e'en now doth downward move  
 We cannot take our upward course by night,  
 'Twere well to think of rest in some fair cove. 45  
 Souls are there yonder, far off to the right ,  
 If thou consent, to them I will thee lead ;  
 And thou shalt know them, not without delight "

<sup>26</sup> The beatific vision of God as the Sun of Righteousness.

<sup>28</sup> Comp. *H* iv 25 for the description of the *limbus* in which there is the *parva damnati*, but not the *parva sanctorum* (Aquino *Summ.* iii 52, 2, *Suppl.* 69, 5). Line 33 embodies the doctrine of one baptism for the remission of sins.

<sup>34</sup> The three theological or supernatural virtues are Faith, Hope, Charity (*Conv.* iii 14, Aquino *Summ.* sec. i 62, 3). The "others" are the natural virtues, probably with a special reference to the four, Fortitude, Temperance, Justice, Prudence, as symbolised in the four stars of C i 23, xxxi 106.

<sup>40</sup> It will be remembered that the pilgrims are still in the outer precincts of the Mountain, the Ante-Purgatorium, and have not entered on Purgatory itself. Within those limits Sordello is free to act as guide, but no farther. Underlying the outer framework of the allegory there is the thought that even those who desire to enter on the work of purification in this life scarcely know how to begin unless they have the guidance either of experience or authority.

<sup>45</sup> The thought which here, and more emphatically in l 53, underlies the symbol, is that, there is no safe walking in the spiritual life without the grace of God, which gives light that the soul needs, that illumining grace must precede the process of purification, and that, without knowledge, the will walks in darkness and cannot climb, might lose its way even on the Mount of Purification, go backwards and not forwards.

"How is this?" answered he, "should one indeed  
 Wish to mount up by night, would some be found 50  
 To hinder, or would want of power impede?"  
 And good Sordello drew along the ground  
 His finger, saying, "When the sun has set,  
 Thou could'st not pass beyond this line as bound.  
 Not that aught else thy onward course would let, 55  
 As thou did'st mount, but Night's o'ershadowing gloom;  
 That and the want of power the will beset.  
 Well might we now with her descending come,  
 And, wandering still, this hillside travel o'er,  
 Whilst the horizon doth the day entomb" 60  
 Then spake my Master, wondering more and more -  
 "Lead us," said he, "e'en there, where thou dost say  
 That we may tarry and find joys, full store"  
 Then some short distance on our feet did stray,  
 When I perceived the Mount was hollowed there, 65  
 As in our world the valleys scoop their way.  
 "Thither," that shade said, "we will now repair,  
 Where in itself the hillside makes a bend,  
 And wait there till the coming day appear"  
 'Twixt hill and plain a winding path did trend, 70  
 Which led within the bosom of the vale,  
 To where the ledge doth more than half descend

70 The description of the vivid beauty seems to come from the paint box used by artists as Dante had seen it in Giotto's studio or used it in his own. The "Indian wood" is probably indigo, but has been identified by some with ebony, and on this supposition the "emerald" is not the gem but the pigment for emerald green used by illuminators. So Ruskin, *MP* at 228. The whole scene brings before us the bright colours of pre-Raphaelite art, the flowers and angel of Fra Angelico. Does the striving after the wider hope show itself in the contrast which this picture, almost as fair as that of the earthly Paradise of C. xxviii 1-42, presents to the popular conception of the sufferings of the soul in Purgatory, or is there any deeper symbolic meaning? One can hardly accept the thought that the colours and the fragrance represent the natural and supernatural virtues, or the pomp and vanities in which the kings who are found there had once delighted. The key of the problem is perhaps found in the hymn which the souls were singing—*Ave Regina, Mater Misericordiae*—which appears in the Roman Breviary as a daily "Compline" hymn, sung, that is, before men retire to rest. The words that follow in that hymn come as from "the exiles from their home," "weeping in a valley of tears." Is not the thought implied that it is true of the fairest scenes of earth, of its purest joys, of the times of refreshing which are granted to the soul between its conversion and the stern discipline which it needs, that they are not our rest, that our home is elsewhere? The company of penitents who are expiating their delayed penitence on earth by a proportionate delay are, it will be seen, those of rulers not long dead. Through Sordello, whose elegy on Blacas (see note on C. vi 74) had made him the fit channel for such an utterance, Dante can pass his judgment upon the part which each had taken in the history of Italy. In Rodolph of Hapsburg, as in his son Albert (C. vi 97), he could only see an example of neglected opportunities. That Emperor had never come to Italy. He might have healed her wounds. He left her to be tended by others (another side glance at Henry VII.), whose help might come, perhaps had already come, too late.

Gold, silver, crimson, ceruse' splendour pale,  
 The Indian wood so lucent and serene,  
 Fresh emerald, when its outer coat doth scale, 75  
 Placed in that vale the plants and flowers between,  
 Would each and all be found surpassed in hue,  
 As less by greater overpowered is seen :  
 Nor did we Nature's painting only view,  
 But of a thousand fragrant odours sweet 80  
 She made a mingled perfume strange and new.  
 Then on the flowers and grass of that retreat,  
*Salve Regina* singing, souls I saw,  
 Who failed, outside the vale, our eyes to meet.  
 "Ere the scant sun doth to its nest withdraw," 85  
 Began the Mantuan, who our steps did guide,  
 "Seek not that I to them your feet should draw  
 The acts and features from this border's side  
 Ye will know better far, of each and all,  
 Than if among them where the plain spreads wide 90  
 He who sits highest and whose looks recall  
 The mien of one who leaves his task undone,  
 And from whose lips no chants responsive fall,  
 Rodolph the Emperor was, who might have won  
 Health for the wounds that have Italia slain, 95  
 While now her cure, by others, lingers on,  
 And he from whom he comfort seems to gain  
 Ruled o'er the land from whence the waters seek  
 The Elbe from Moldau, from the Elbe the main.  
 His name was Ottocar as infant weak, 100  
 Far better he than bearded Wenceslaus,  
 His son, who lives in lust and ease full sleek

<sup>90</sup> Bohemia is defined by its two boundary rivers, the Moldau, which gives its name to Moldavia, and the Elbe. Of Ottocar, elected king of Bohemia in 1253, we know that he took part in advising the execution of Conradin, that his subjects complained of his oppression, that he was said to have been chosen Emperor and to have refused, that he was generally at war with the Emperor Rudolph, but was finally compelled to do homage to him, and died in a battle near Vienna in 1278. Here too was one who had no record to show worthy of his high calling, except the courage which Dante recognises as having been shown in his youth.

<sup>101</sup> Wenceslaus IV, chosen king on his father's death, hardly seems to have deserved the epithet of "good" by which he was known in Bohemian history, and which still attaches to his name in a popular Christmas carol. He too refused opportunities, declined the kingdoms of Poland and Hungary which were offered to him, passed the latter on to his son Wenceslaus V, and led a life of slothful and sensual ease, which is here contrasted with his father's warlike achievements. His daughter married the son of the Emperor Henry VII.

And that snub-nosed one who to counsel draws  
 Close joined with him of aspect mild and sweet,  
 Died in his flight and shamed the hly's cause. 105  
 Behold, how he upon his breast doth beat!  
 That other see, how he, with many a sigh,  
 Rests cheeks on hands, so finding couch full meet,  
 Sire, and wife's sire, of France's infamy,  
 They know his life how sin-stained and debased, 110  
 And thence the grief that doth their spirits try  
 He who so stout-limbed seems, whose voice is raised  
 In song with him, of nostrils strong and wide,  
 Was with the girdle of all virtues graced,  
 And if the youth who sitteth by his side, 115  
 Had after him survived, as king to reign,  
 From vase to vase had grace been well supplied,

<sup>105</sup> The large-nosed or snub-nosed one is Philip III, the Bold, son of Louis IX. He was defeated in an expedition against Peter III of Arragon by that king's fleet, and died of a broken heart at Perpignan. His monument at Narbonne confirms the latter of the two readings as to the nose (*Monif. in Pail*). The form of "aspect mild" is, as defined in l. 105, Henry of Navarre, brother of the good King Edward of H. xxii. 52, whose daughter married Philip the Fair, and thus brought Navarre under the kings of France.

<sup>109</sup> The "infamy of France" is Philip the Fair, whom Dante singles out here and elsewhere for special condemnation. Comp. C. xx. 91, xxxii. 152, xxxiii. 45, H. xix. 85, *Par.* xix. 118. In his treatment of his subjects, of Boniface VIII, and of the Knights Templars, the poet could see nothing but self-seeking greed, the antithesis of the ideal king. Father and father-in-law are alike pained and shocked at his enormous guilt. Philip (d. 1314) was perhaps living at the time when Dante wrote.

<sup>113</sup> The stalwart one is Peter III of Arragon (b. 1276). He married Constance, the daughter of Manfred (C. iii. 112), became king of Arragon in 1276, and of Sicily after the "Vespers" (Nov. 30, 1282), and died 1285. Dante's estimate of his character, possibly influenced by the fact that he had defeated Philip the Bold, is confirmed by *l. ill.* vii. 103, and *Benvenuto*. Peter had been excommunicated for infringing the rights of the Church in accepting the crown of Sicily, but had been absolved by the Archbishop of Tarragona.

<sup>115</sup> Charles of Anjou, who is sufficiently identified by his aquiline nose, is painted in darker colours in C. xx. 61-69. Here he is rightly joined with Peter of Arragon, who had exclaimed on learning of his death, that "the best knight in the world had been taken from it." The fact that he is placed not in Hell but in Purgatory implies that Dante had seen some elements of good, some germ of repentance, that led him to feel hopeful.

<sup>116</sup> The youth who, had he lived, might have been as the Marcellus of Sicily, is Alphonso III, the Magnificent, who succeeded his father Peter as king of Arragon in 1285 and d. 1291 at the age of twenty. As it was, he secured the independence of Arragon against the claims of Charles of Anjou. The other heirs are James II, crowned 1286 as king of Sicily, in 1291 as king of Arragon, d. 1337. He surrendered Sicily to his father in law, Charles II of Naples (*Par.* xix. 127). Frederick, however, asserted his claim to the island, of which he had been made king in 1276, and after a war between the two brothers obtained the mastery and occupied the throne till his death in 1337. He held his own against Philip the Fair, Charles of Valois, and Charles II of Naples, against four Popes, Boniface VIII, Benedict XI, Clement V, and John XXII. The better heritage to which none of the sons succeeded, is that of the nobleness and equity of their father (comp. *Par.* xix. 127-138). Frederick's epitaph at Catania, however, speaks in high terms of him as

"Legis  
 Divinae cultor, humani juris amator"

But the epitaphs of kings are not always trustworthy chronicles. On the general question of the heredity of goodness and true nobility, see *Canz.* iii, and its exposition in *Conv.* iv.

Which none can of the other heirs maintain ;  
 Frederick and Giacomo the kingdoms own ;  
 None the far better heritage attain. 120  
 But seldom human excellence hath grown  
 Through branches of the tree . He wills it so  
 Who gives it, that we ask of Him alone  
 Eke to that large-nosed one my speech doth go,  
 Nor less that Pier, who with him doth sing , 125  
 Whence Provence and Apulia wail for woe.  
 Plants from old seed do oft degenerate spring,  
 As Constance of her spouse still makes more boast  
 Than Beatrice and Margaret of their king  
 See ye the king alone 'mid all the host, 130  
 Henry of simple life, with England's crown ,  
 He in his branches happier is than most.  
 And he who lower than the rest bows down  
 Is Marquis Guglielmo, who doth raise  
 His eyes, through whom doth Alessandria's town 135  
 Trouble Montferrat and the Canavese.

<sup>124</sup> The remark just made is applied also to the descendants of Charles of Anjou. Of these, Charles II, commonly known as Clotto, or the Cripple, joined James of Aragon in his fratricidal war with Frederick III of Sicily (Comp *Par* xix 127 for his "one good deed") For Peter see note on l. 112

<sup>126</sup> Provence had come to Charles II through his mother, Beatrice, daughter of the last Count

<sup>128</sup> The two princesses are not easily identified (1) They may have been the daughters of Charles II, just named, one the wife of James, the other of Frederick of Arragon. Constance, the mother of those two princes, daughter of Manfred, was wife of Peter III. So taken, the lines are a somewhat involved way of repeating the fact that Charles of Anjou and Peter of Arragon were alike in having sons inferior to themselves. But so far as records go, the names of those princesses were Bianca and Eleonora (2) Others (*Vent*) have found in them the daughters of Raymond Berenger (comp *Par* vi 128-135), Margarita, married to Louis IX, and Beatrice, to Charles of Anjou. It is obvious, however, that Louis IX. has no proper place in the comparison. Dante would hardly have placed Peter III of Arragon above the crusading saint. (3) A more satisfactory solution of the problem is found in taking the names as those of the two wives of Charles of Anjou, the second being the daughter of Eudes, Duke of Burgundy. The comparison is thus sharpened, as Charles was inferior to Peter of Arragon, so in the same proportion has he sons inferior to himself

<sup>130</sup> As in the case of Saladin (*H* iv 129) and Sordello (*C* vi 59), the soul that has been conspicuously unlike others in its lifetime stands apart even behind the veil. The description of Henry III's character is sufficiently general, and may briefly have embodied the repute which he had gained throughout Europe during his long reign (1216-72). As the brother-in-law of Frederick II, his name was well known throughout Italy. It is probable, however, looking to the other allusions to English history to be found in the *Comm* (*H* xii 120, *Par* xix 122), that Dante's estimate of Henry's character may have been drawn from what he heard in England from those who had personally known the saintly king. No words could better describe that character, devout, pure, lacking strength and energy, preferring masses to sermons, because it was better to have an hour's communion with a friend than to hear an hour's talk about him, than the "simple life" of Dante. The "better man" is Edward I, in whose work as a lawgiver Dante may have seen, as the name of the English Justman indicates, something like an approach to his ideal of a true king, and of whom Villani (*viii* 90) speaks as one of the wisest Christians and most valiant princes of his time

<sup>134</sup> William VII, Marquis of Montferrat, at first (1274) the ally, afterwards the opponent of Charles of Anjou. The name presents many points of contact with the history of Europe,

## CANTO VIII.

*The Angels that guard the Valley—Nino of Gallura—The Three Stars—The  
Serpent Foe—Currado Malaspina*

THE hour was come which brings back yearning new  
 To those far out at sea, and melts their hearts,  
 The day that they have bid sweet friends adieu;  
 Whereat the pilgrim fresh with strong love starts,  
 If he perchance hear bells, far off yet clear, 5  
 Which seem to mourn the day's life that departs,  
 When I, unheeding sounds that met mine ear,  
 On one that then rose up began to gaze,  
 Who bade us with his hands to stand and hear  
 He clasped his palms, and both did upward raise, 10  
 Fixing upon the distant East his eyes,  
 As telling God, "Nought else such joy conveys"  
*Te lucis ante*, did devoutly rise  
 From out his lips, and with such dulcet tone,  
 It bore me from myself in ecstasies, 15

his first wife having been the daughter of Richard, Earl of Gloucester, his second of Alphonso X of Castile, and his daughter Intinthe having been married to the Greek Emperor, Andronicus II Palæologus. Alessandria (named after Pope Alexander III, its founder) rebelled against him (1290) in conjunct on with Asti and other towns to the north west of Italy. The Marquis was defeated and taken, and died in prison in 1292. His son John declared war against the Alessandrines, but they, in alliance with Matteo Visconti, invaded Monteferrat (stretching from the right bank of the Po to the Lagurian Alps) and the Canavese lying between the Graian Alps and the Po. Dante praises him for his generosity in *Conv.* iv. 6.

<sup>1</sup> Apart from the exceeding beauty and tenderness of the whole passage, it has the special interest of being obviously a personal reminiscence. The poet had known what it was to hear the Ave Maria bell as the evening closed, and as the ship in which he sailed was moving farther and farther from the shore. The starting point of such a voyage may have been Pisa or Genoa, and the occasion the journey which took him to Arles (*H.* ix. 112, *Par.* x. 136). Or had he sailed with Henry VII from Genoa to Pisa?

<sup>7</sup> The practical suspension of one sense while the whole mind was absorbed in the activity of another is again a personal characteristic (*C.* iv. 1-12). The soul which is now seen is probably that of Nino (abbreviation of Ugolino), judge of Gallura in Sardinia (l. 53), a grandson of Ugolino (*H.* xxiii. 1) by whom Fra Gontia was condemned to death (*H.* xxii. 81). After a five years' war with Guido di Montefeltro (1288-97) he died in 1296. His heart was deposited, by his wish, two years after his death, in the Church of the Franciscans at Lucca. He was a personal friend of Dante's, and was with him at Caprona (*H.* xxi. 95). The act and look of devotion—hands clasped in prayer, face turned eastward—of which we read here, were, we may well believe, what Dante had noted as characteristic during his lifetime.

<sup>15</sup> *Te lucis ante terminum.* The Compline hymn of the Roman Breviary, and therefore coming naturally after the Ave Maria or *Angelus*.

And then the others left him not alone,  
 Sweetly, devoutly, to the hymn's full end,  
 With eyes upon the sphere supernal thrown.  
 Now, Reader, to the truth thine eyes down bend,  
 For now so thin and subtle is the veil 20  
 Such barrier thou may'st easily transcend  
 I saw that gentle army hushed and pale,  
 In silence upward gaze with fixed eye,  
 As those with whom meek lowly hopes prevail  
 And coming forth, descending from on high, 25  
 I saw two angels, each with sword of fire,  
 Truncated flames, of forms that points deny.  
 Verdant as new-born leaflets their attire  
 Was seen, while they with green wings onward drove,  
 Beaten and blown in many a breezy spire. 30  
 One near us came a little space above;  
 One on the bank, o' the other side, did light,  
 So that the crowd between them both did move  
 Well could I mark in them the head so bright,  
 But at the face the gazing eye must quail, 35  
 As shrinks each sense beneath excess of night.  
 "Both of them came, as guardians of the vale,  
 From Mary's bosom," then Sordello said,  
 "Lest, coming quick, the serpent should prevail."

<sup>19</sup> What is the inner meaning which the poet wishes us to read between the lines? Probably it lies in the fact that the hymn which the spirits sang spoke of troubled dream and other incidents of the bodily life which they had left (*Procul recedant somnia*). In C. xi. 22 we have a like fact and a formal explanation of it in connexion with the Lord's Prayer, and here, as there, the thought is that the Church behind the veil joins in the prayer, and prays of the Church on earth, even when they have ceased to be personally applicable. Possibly a yet further thought lies below the surface, *sc.* that the saints of God may rightly pray, in sympathy with others, against perils which they themselves have in one form overcome, the approach of the serpent in l. 95 suggesting yet again that till the work of purification has been definitely commenced, even the disembodied spirit is liable, perhaps through memory, to the allurement of its own besetting sin. Compare the striking passage, which may have been in Dante's mind, in Augustine (*Conf.* x. 30).

<sup>20</sup> In the Roman Breviary the hymn *Te lucis* is followed, after the *Nunc Dimittis* and versicles, by a Collect: "Visit O God, we beseech, this habitation, and drive far from it all snare of the enemy, let Thy holy angels dwell in it." The souls are clearly assumed to have said the prayer, and the appearance of the angels is the answer to it. The description reminds us of the angels of Fra Angelico, and every feature has its meaning, which, as l. 20 indicates, is not far to seek. There are the "flaming swords" of Gen. iii. 24 no longer used to bar the way to the Tree of Life, but for man's defence, and the points are broken to indicate that even the terrors of the Word of God, which is "the sword of the Spirit," are abated by the mercy and the love revealed in Christ, and their wings and their garments are alike of green, which is the hue of hope (C. iii. 135). That, too, was the colour of Beatrice's mantle (C. xxx. 32). Their fair golden locks assumed a supernatural beauty which the eye could not bear to look on, and they have come from the bosom of her who is no longer the *Mater Dolorosa*, but the *Mater Misericordiarum*, who appears in the heaven of stars (*Par.* xxiii. 73), but has her abode eternally in the empyrean (*Par.* xxxi. 116), which is the dwelling-place of God.



Then I, who knew not where he might invade, 40  
 Turned and drew nearer to those arms so true,  
 So chill a terror had-my spirit frayed.  
 Then spake Sordello: "Now this valley through  
 Pass we to speak to those great souls below,  
 Full sweet 'twill be for them to look on you" 45  
 But three steps down I deem that I did go,  
 And found myself beneath, there watching me  
 I saw one, as if longing me to know  
 Already now the air grew dark to see,  
 But not so that, between his eyes and mine, 50  
 It failed to show what erst my sight did flee  
 Then he and I did, each to each, incline,  
 Ah Nino, noble judge, how glad was I  
 Not with the damned to see that face of thine!  
 No greetings pleasant did we there pass by, 55  
 And then he asked, "How long is't since thou'rt come  
 Though the wide seas to where this Mount soars high?"  
 "Ah," said I, "through the realms of mournful gloom  
 I came this morn, and in my first life still,  
 Albert I seek the other as I roam" 60  
 And when my answer did their hearing fill,  
 Sordello and the other drew aside  
 As those whom great astonishment doth thrill.  
 One turned to Virgil, and the other cried  
 To one who sat there, "Rise, Currado, rise, 65  
 Come and see now what God's grace doth provide,"

42 As one who is not yet purified, the pilgrim shrinks in terror from the thought that, though he has escaped Hell, the Tempter may still assail him. Even the new presence of the angels is not enough to reassure him, and he turns in his terror to the human wisdom of his guide.

44 The presence of the poet is welcome, not only, if at all, because he can immortalise the fame of the great ones of the earth, but, as to C. v. P7, 133, 11 2f, because he can himself pray, and ask others to pray, for their more rapid growth to holiness.

48 In spite of the gathering darkness Dante recognises his friend. The words of l. 54 imply that he had not been quite easy as to Nino's doom in the other world. It had been a comfort not to find him in Hell.

47 The "far waters" are those near Ombia (C. ii. 101).

60 Sordello, it would seem, had not recognised the fact that Dante was still living, there had been no sun to cast a shadow (C. vi. 56), and the Mantuan was so absorbed in Virgil that he had failed to note the breathing which revealed the fact to others (C. ii. 67-68).

63 For the history of Currado Malaspina, see l. 118.

Then turned to me : " By those great charities  
 Thou ow'st to Him who ever so doth hide  
 His primal Why, that there no passage lies.  
 When thou shalt pass beyond these waters wide, 70  
 Tell my Giovanna that for me she pray,  
 Where prayers which pure ones pour are satisfied ,  
 Her mother's love, I trow, hath passed away,  
 Since she hath changed her weeds of whitest hue  
 Well may the sad one wish for them to-day ! 75  
 Thus clearly in her case is brought to view  
 How long in women dwells love's fire alone,  
 If sight or touch do not the glow renew ,  
 The Viper, by the hosts of Milan known,  
 Will not for her make such fair burial-place, 80  
 As would the Cock Gallura bears have dona."  
 So spake he, and his brow was marked with trace  
 Of that true righteous zeal which, in the heart,  
 Doth, with a measured temper, burn apace  
 My eager eye as if for Heaven did start, 85  
 Still to tho point where stars move on most slow,  
 As wheel where nearest to its axle-part  
 And my Guide said, " Why look thine eyes up so ? "  
 And I to him " At those three bright fires there,  
 Wherewith this hither pole is all aglow." 90

<sup>67</sup> The limit of man's knowledge to presence of the Infinite Wisdom is emphasised again, as it had been in C. III. 34-39.

<sup>71</sup> Of Giovanna, the daughter of Nino who, on her father's death (1296), was commended by Boniface VIII. to the care of the citizens of Volterra, little is known beyond the fact that she died young (in 1300 she was only nine). Commentators differ as to her husband's name or indeed the fact of her being married. There is an almost infinite pathos in the longing of the father for the 'innocent' prayers of his child. The widow Beatrice, was daughter of Obizzo, Marquis of Este, and in 1300 (but after the date of the vision) took Galeazzo Visconti of Milan, as her second husband, eleven years younger than herself. Line 75 implies that Dante, writing *circa* 1314, knew that the marriage had not been a happy one. Lines 76, 77, perhaps suggest that Dante's separation from his wife seemed to him to have led, on her side to something like indifference. We note in passing, (1) the Italian origin of widows' weeds (l. 74), (2) the mediæval use of heraldic achievements (*ovvero* "hatchments") over burial places. A viper biting a boy was the badge of the Milanese Visconti, a cock the official bearing of the Judge of Gallura. The latter would have been an honourable record of a faithful life. The former was far otherwise than that.

<sup>88</sup> One feels, as has been said (*Klacks* p. 8), that, consciously or unconsciously, Dante paints himself, and that the lines might be placed under his portrait.

<sup>89</sup> Astronomical commentators have, after their manner, identified the stars with a in Eridanus,  $\zeta$  in the Ship, and  $\alpha$  in the Meridian, not throwing much light thereby on Dante's meaning, but suggesting the thought that here also, as in C. I. 123, he may have been drawing on the information he had gained from Marco Polo, or other travellers in the southern hemisphere. The allegorists, with better right, find in them the three Christian graces, Faith, Hope, Charity, as contrasted with the four natural virtues of C. I. 20 (comp. C. xxxi. 104-111). As they raise the others fall, that which was glorious "having no glory by reason of the glory that excelleth" (2 Cor. xii. 10).

And he to me : " The four stars bright and clear  
 Thou saw'st this morn are low in yonder track,  
 And these have mounted where before they were ;  
 And as he spoke Sordello drew him back,  
 And said, " Behold, there comes our Adversary ! " 95  
 And pointed with his hand lest sight should lack.  
 There, on that side where no defence doth lie  
 For that small valley, was a serpent seen ,  
 Such, may be, led Eve bitter food to try.  
 The evil snake wound grass and flowers between, 100  
 Wriggling its head at times and licking well  
 Its back, as when a beast itself doth clean.  
 I saw it not, and therefore cannot tell,  
 How downward swooped the falcons of high Heaven,  
 Yet that both swooped was plainly what befell. 105  
 Hearing the air before their green wings driven,  
 The serpent fled, and to their post on high  
 The angels turned, with ordered pace and even  
 The spirit who had to the Judge drawn high  
 When he had called, through all that conflict dire 110  
 Had never ceased on me to fix his eye.  
 " So may the light that leads thee with its fire,  
 Find wax enough in thy free-will's estate  
 As needeth for the azure plains up higher,"  
 So it began, " if thou can'st now relate 115  
 True news of Valdimagra or its coast,  
 Tell me, for there it was I once waxed great.

<sup>95</sup> The presence of the Serpent tempter brings us face to face with a theological difficulty. The dogma of the Church was that souls in Purgatory were at least free from temptation, and that dogma Dante endorses in C. xi 22-24 xxvi 172. What then is meant by that which seems to contradict the dogma? The answer is found partly perhaps in the somewhat technical plea that the souls which the Serpent visits are not yet in Purgatory, but expiating their delay on earth by a delay behind the veil, more substantially, in the thought that Dante wrote out of the fulness of his own experience of the night troubles of the soul in the earlier stages of conversion (see note on l. 19). He had felt what a spirit like his own has described as the "miserable power" of dreams (J. H. Newman, *Verses*, p. 127) to throw the soul back upon the memories of a guilty past, which the waking spirit would not entertain for an instant. And the tempter comes on the side where there is no rampart, the weak, defenceless side of what had been the soul's besetting sin among the green grass and flowers, the blameless joys of life, gliding and licking itself as though at last it had ceased to be venomous.

<sup>104</sup> The "heavenly falcons" are, of course, the angels who have come, in Spenser's phrase, "against foul fiends to aid us militant."

<sup>112</sup> The "wax" of man's free will is to feed the light which God has given, and without which it could not have burnt. In Augustine's words, "*Qui creavit te sine te non servabit te sine te*." The "highest azure" (literally *enamel*) may be either the earthly Paradise at the summit of the Mount, or the yet higher Heaven of the empyrean.

Currado Malaspina, so I boast  
 My name, though not the elder, yet his kin ;  
 The love which here is cleansed mine own had most " 120  
 "Oh," said I to him, "ne'er thy lands within  
 Have I yet been, but where can one abide  
 In Europe, where due praise they do not win ?  
 The fame by which thy house is magnified  
 Proclaims its lords, proclaims its country too, 125  
 So that he knows who never thither hied.  
 And as I hope to mount on high, to you  
 I swear your great race hath not forfeited  
 The glory to free purse and sharp sword due.  
 Nature and use such grace upon it shed, 130  
 That though a vile head leads the world astray,  
 Sole it goes right, and scorns wrong path to tread "  
 And he. "Now go; for ere the sun shall stay  
 Seven times at rest in Aries' bod again,  
 Which he with all his four feet holds in sway, 135

110 The history of the Malaspina family is interwoven with that of four centuries of Italian history as the Lords of Lunigiana, of which Carrara and the Val di Magra, opening on the Bay of Spezia (*H* xxiv 145 *Per* ix 89) form a part. As Guelphs they took part under Obizzo II. with the league of the Lombard cities against Frederick Barbarossa. The elder, Conrad, succeeded Obizzo in 1193, and was in his turn succeeded by his sons Manfred, Moroello, Frederick, and Albert, and the Conrad who now meets us is the son of Frederick. The territory was divided in proportions, into which we need not enter, among the children and grandchildren of Conrad I. Moroello (*H* 1315), the son of Albert, appears in *H* xxiv 145 as the storm cloud of the Val di Magra. His cousin, another Moroello, son of Manfred, although opposed in politics, was a personal friend and protector of the poet's, who is said in the letter which bears the name of Fra Ilario (possibly apocryphal) to have dedicated the *Purgatorio* to him, and he and his son Franceschino welcomed Dante as a guest in 1306, in the earlier period of his exile. An earlier Malaspina was conspicuous among the patrons of the Provençal troubadours (*Weg* 37, *Jaur* 1 257), and the taste for culture may have been inherited by his descendants. The whole passage that follows is obviously the utterance of the poet's gratitude. (See *Life*, c. v.)

120 The words point probably to the special generosity which led Conrad to divide his patrimony among his brothers and their children. He too was "*notus in fratres animi paterni*," like the Proculeius of Hor. *Od* v 2, 6.

121 Written, we must believe, after 1306, but from the assumed standpoint of 1300. The European, at least the Italian, fame of the house of the Malaspina was shown conspicuously in the fact that their territory was looked on as a kind of neutral borderland in which the exiles of all parties were sure of finding a safe refuge.

122 The "glory of the purse" is, of course, more than that of being one of the richest families of Italy, and includes the right use of riches. The Malaspina seemed to Dante the embodiment of the idea of true nobility in the *Canzone* which forms the basis of *Conv* iv. From his point of view *Noblesse oblige* might have been taken as their motto. Comp. *Little's v. Malaspina*.

123 The construction of the line is ambiguous and the meaning uncertain. The "guilty head" has been taken for Satan as the "prince of this world," for Rome, for the Curia Romana, for Boniface VIII., for the Emperor, who was negligent of his duties. On the whole, the reference to the Pope seems most probable. Dante will not sacrifice his principles to his compliments, and makes it a chief point of praise that the Malaspina are good and noble in spite of being Guelphs, that they are the exception which proves the rule.

124 At Easter 1300 the sun was in the sign of Aries (*H* i 38). Within seven years from that date (the *Canto* was obviously written after 1307), Dante would know from experience the large-hearted hospitality of the house of Lunigiana. The picture of the four feet of the Ram covering the pillow of the Egyptian is obviously drawn from the star-maps which Dante had used in his astronomical studies.

This, thine opinion courteous, in thy brain  
 Shall be as to its centre riveted  
 With firmer nails than speech of other men,  
 Unless the course of justice stays its tread."

### CANTO IX.

*The Vision of the Eagle—The Dream Journey—The Vision of Lucia—The Steps of the Portal of Purgatory—The Seven P's—The Gold and Silver Keys*

SHE who of yore shared old Tithonus' bed,  
 On the far Eastern gallery grew white,  
 As from her sweet friend's arms her steps were led  
 Her brow with many a jewelled star was bright,  
 Set in the figure of that creature cold, 5  
 Which with its tail is nations wont to smite  
 And of the steps where she her course doth hold,  
 The Night had traversed two, when there we stayed,  
 And the third now its wings did downward fold,  
 When I, as by my Adam-flesh downweighed, 10  
 Conquered by sleep upon the grass reched,  
 Which we all five our resting-place had made.

<sup>1</sup> The readings vary between Titone = Tithonus, the husband of Aurora, doomed to the dreary immortality of perpetual old age, and Titan = the Sun. Volumes have been written on its meaning, and even the carefully concocted summary in *Scart* occupies thirteen closely printed pages. With the former reading we have a description of the dawn of day, or possibly, assuming that Dante followed a mediæval legend (Jacop. della Lana), that there were two Auroras, the rising of the moon. If we read "Titan," then the concubine is Lethys, who, in Greek mythology, is the bride of Oceanus, but may have been thought of as the concubine of the Sun. *Scart*, who adopts this reading, takes the "sweet friend" as the Sun, but explains the line as meaning that the ocean's gleam of whiteness was "outside his arm," i.e., that it came from the moon and not the sun. Witte (*D. A.* i. 27) agrees, with *Scart* as to its being the moonrise, not the sunrise, that is painted, laying stress upon the fact that an ideal computation of the position of the stars for the latitude and longitude of the Mount of Purgatory would give 9 P. M. as the hour of the moon's rising on the Easter Monday of 1300, and that at 8.30 P. M. its glimmer would be seen in the tail of the Scorpion. I incline to the reading "Tithonus," and to the explanation that it was the very earliest gleam of dawn, when the Eastern horizon is faintly lit up and the sky is still bright with stars. At this hour Dante, who had kept watch till then, fell asleep.

<sup>2</sup> It has been urged that the picture is true of moonlight, scarcely so of sunrise. We have the

*"Nec cauda la cursus,  
 Luna negat splendet simul sub lumine pontus"*

of *En. vii.* 8. 9, not the "*jamque rubescebat radibus mare*," of *ll.* 25, 26. But the first gleams of day that precede the sunrise have often this white, cold shining. The steps by which night travels are not hours but "watches" of the night, and this brings us to *circa* 3 A. M.

<sup>3</sup> The disembodied spirits appear as not needing sleep. Adam's nature, in Dante (not the taint of original sin, but simply the "corruptible body which presseth down the soul," C. xi. 43. *Ovid*, ix. 15), leads him to fall asleep. He could not as yet "watch one hour."

It was the hour when swallow to the wind  
 Chants her sad songs as morning's dawn draws near, —  
 Perchance as ancient sorrows haunt her mind, — 15  
 And when our soul, more alien from the sphere  
 Of flesh, and less to rush of hot thoughts given,  
 As half-divine looke forth in vision clear;  
 I seemed to see in dreams, as in mid-heaven,  
 An eagle hovering with its plumes of gold, 20  
 With wide wings poised to swoop when downward driven,  
 And I, it seemed, then found me where of old  
 Young Ganymede his kindred did forsake,  
 Rapt to the Council which the high Gods hold:  
 Methought, perchance he on his prey doth break 25  
 Here only as by use, and scorneth quite  
 That spoil gained elsewhere he should upward take.  
 Then wheeling, as no seemed, a wider flight,  
 Like a dread thunderbolt he downward came,  
 And snatched me upward to the burning light. 30  
 There seemed both he and I to feel the flame,  
 And that imagined fire so scorched, it broke  
 Perforce the slumber which my soul o'ercame.

<sup>13</sup> The sleep lasts, according as we assume a solar or lunar aurora for six hours or two or three. Then comes a dream at the hour when dreams are true (*H* xxvi 7), when the swallow's plaintive song is heard. The "former woes" refer to the transformation of Procne and Philomela as told by Ovid (*Met* vi 412-676). Dante, it would seem, identifies Philomela with the swallow, Procne with the nightingale (*C* xiii 19). Ovid, curiously enough, in his

*"Quarum petit altera sylvas,  
 Altera tecta subit" — (Met vi 668),*

seems to leave the question open

<sup>20</sup> The eagle, as the bird of Jupiter, seen from the classical standpoint, suggested the story of Ganymede (*Hom* II xx 232, *Aen* v 253). With Dante, however, there was another memory, and the eagle recalled the four living creatures of Ezekiel (i 10) and St. John (*Rev.* iv 7), perhaps also the Church's hymn on the Evangelist, as symbolised by the eagle—

*"Volat avis sine meta,  
 Quo nec vates, nec propheta,  
 Evolvit altius,"*

and so became a fit emblem of Lucia (see note on *H* ii 97), as the symbol of illuminating grace. Even the Ganymede story is obviously viewed as having an allegorical or mystic meaning, and setting forth the rapture of the soul to a region above earthly things.

<sup>25</sup> Translated into the language of theology, the thought of Dante was that the gift of spiritual illumination comes ordinarily ("perchance") to those who have already made some progress in their conversion. *Dest* xxxii to may have suggested the imagery. The "fire" was that of the empyrean sphere to which Dante was now translated in his vision, as anticipating the actual completion of his pilgrimage.

<sup>30</sup> The thought implied is that the rapture involved an element of terror as well as joy for mortal man as yet unpurified, that, as in Schiller's words—

*"Schrecklich ist es Desner Wahrheit  
 Sterbliches Gefäss zu sehn,"*

Not otherwise, of old, Achilles woke,  
 Turning his opened eyes on all around, 35  
 And knowing not the place that met his look,  
 What time his mother unto Scyros' ground  
 Bore him from Chiron in her arms asleep,  
 Whence the Greeks dragged him, there in hiding found  
 Then I roused me, when fled that slumber deep 40  
 From off my face, and I, in sore affright,  
 Was as one chilled with fear, whose blood doth creep.  
 Near me my Comforter alone in sight  
 Appeared; the sun two hours had sped his way,  
 And my gaze turned where shore and sea unite. 45  
 Then said my Master: "Cast off thy dismay,  
 Sure that thus far a good course is begun;  
 Check not thy powers, but let them have full play.  
 Now shall thy steps through Purgatory run  
 See there the high cliff that doth round it go, 50  
 See, where it seems disjoined, the entrance won.  
 Just now at dawn before the sun's full glow,  
 While sleep was on thy spirit inwardly,  
 Upon the flowers that deck the ground below  
 A lady came and said, 'Lo! Lucia I 55  
 Let me take him who lieth sleeping there,  
 And I will speed him in his course on high.'

34 The reference is to Dante's favourite, Statius (*Achill.* 1. 247-250), and the passage is worth quoting, both for its own beauty and as showing how Dante appreciated in others that poetry of childhood of which the *Comm.* supplies so many instances (C. xxx 44, 79, *H.* xxiii 38)—

"Cum puera irremediata quies, oculique yacentis  
 Infusum sensere diem, stupet aere primo  
 Quae loca? quis fluctus? ubi Pelion? omnia vera  
 Atque ignota videt, dubitatque agnoscere matrem"

44 The pilgrim's surprise at finding that it was nearly the third hour of the day may possibly confirm the view that the opening lines of the Canto described the rising of the moon. The solution of the problem is probably to be found in the fact that the hymn which the souls were singing when the travellers entered the valley of the kings was that of the Compline Service, *sc.* after 9 P.M., that after this the three stars are shining brightly. Thus there is time for the attack and discomfiture of the serpent, and then for the meetings with Nino and Malaspina. This would bring us to about midnight, as the hour when Dante is supposed to fall asleep. What startles him and reminds him of Achilles is that he looks out only on the ocean. The valley with its flowers, the souls of the mighty kings, have all vanished. He learns that his vision was a reality. Lucia, his patron saint, who dwells with his Beatrice in Paradise, with her *nomen et omen*, has quickened his slow ascent. He can enter within the gates of Purgatory, which he has thus reached. I may add to the facts stated in note on *H.* ii 97, in connection with Lucia, that one of the churches in Florence that bear her name stands in the Via de' Bardi, presumably, therefore, in the street in which Beatrice's husband lived. This was probably the church in which he had gazed on his beloved one as she listened to the praises of the Queen of Angels (*V.N.* c. 5). S. Mary, Lucia, Beatrice, and, I may add, Matilda, were indissolubly connected in his thoughts.

Sordello stayed, and those good spirits dear :  
 She took thee up, and as the day grew bright,  
 She mounted, and I too, her footsteps near ; 60  
 Then here she laid thee, but first drew my sight  
 With her fair eyes, to that gate opened wide .  
 Then she and sleep together took their flight."  
 As one whose doubting heart, once certified,  
 Full soon doth into comfort change his fear, 65  
 When Truth no more the covering veil doth hide,  
 So was I changed, as though no care were near ;  
 My Leader saw me, and along the rock  
 Moved, and toward the height I followed there  
 Reader ! thou seest well how I unlock 70  
 My theme's rich stores ; then wonder not, I pray,  
 If with more art I fertilise its stock.  
 So we drew nigh, and in the place did stay  
 Where first an opening narrow seemed to break,  
 Like passage which through stone walls gives a way. 75  
 A gate I saw, and three steps upward make  
 An access to it, each of diverse hue,  
 And there a Warder sat who never spake  
 And as mine eyes gained clearer, fuller view,  
 I saw him seated on the topmost stair, 80  
 With face that did my power to gaze subdue.  
 In his right hand a naked sword he bare,  
 Which upon us its rays reflected still,  
 So that in vain mine eyes oft met its glare.  
 "Speak where ye are, and tell me what your will," 85  
 So he began to speak "Where is your guide ?  
 Take heed lest this your journey work you ill "

61 The line is full of suggestive associations: (1) If Lucia be the earlier saint of that name, we remember that she had torn out her eyes because they had given rise to an unholy passion in her heathen lover. (2) As the eyes of the "gentle lady" of *Canto* xiv are explained in *Canto* ii 26 as meaning the demonstrations of philosophy, so here those of Lucia stand for the intuitive perception that the way of purification is now open for the repentant souls.

70 Like the "whoso hath ears to hear" of the great Master (*Matt* xiii 9) the address to the reader, as in *Il* ix 61, *Par* x 22, is a call not only, or chiefly, if at all, to admire the poet's mastery in thought and speech, but to put forth all his power to read the inner meaning which lies below the surface of all its outward beauty.

75 The entrance to Hell was wide enough (*Il* v 20). Here we have the "strait gate and the narrow way" of *Matt* vii 13.

78 For the three steps see *Il* 94-102. The Warder of the gate is the Angel of Purgatory. The sword has been explained as the symbol of righteous judgment in general or priestly jurisdiction in particular, or "the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God" (*Eph* vi 17). Possibly all three thoughts are fused together.

86 The question of the Warder-angel implies that the souls that came to the gate were



"A heavenly Lady," then my Chief replied,  
     "Familiar with these things, but just before  
     Said to us, 'See the gate, thence pass inside.'"  
 "And may she speed your footsteps more and more!"  
     Began that Warder, with kind speech and fair.  
     "Come forward then, and these our steps pass o'er."  
 Thither did we draw nigh, and that first stair  
     Was of white marble, polished so and clean,  
     It mirrored all my features as they were.  
 The second darker than dusk perse was seen,  
     Of stone all rugged, rough and coarse in grain,  
     With many a crack its length and breadth between.  
 The third, which o'er the others towers amain,  
     Appeared as if of fiery porphyry,  
     Like blood that gushes crimson from the vein.  
 On this, his two feet firmly fixed, saw I  
     God's angel, seated on the threshold stone,  
     Which seemed a rock of adamant to the eye.  
 O'er the three steps my Guide then led me on,  
     With all good will, and said, "Now, humbly pray  
     That bolts and bars to us be open thrown."  
 Then prostrate at the holy feet I lay.  
     Mercy I begged, and opening of the gate,  
     And thrice I smote my breast in contrite way.

commonly brought thither by the angel appointed for that ministry. Here the place of the angel had been taken, in the case of the living man, by Lucia, *i. e.*, by special supernatural illumination. The warning that follows the question was to remind men that the work of the soul's purification was no light matter, to be entered on with a light heart. Men must count the cost, or they would fail in it (*Luke* xiv 28-30). The angel is, as it were, the confessor of the souls behind the veil.

<sup>94</sup> The three steps are probably intended to answer to the three elements of penitence, as defined by the Schoolmen—contrition, confession, satisfaction (*Lomb. Sent.* iv 16A). But, as the elaborated description shows, that formula had been received by Dante in all its full significance. (1) The white marble in which he saw himself mirrored indicates the self-knowledge without which contrition is incomplete, the purity of conscience which can recall the memories of past sins without fresh guilt. (2) The dark gloomy hue, the broken and rough surface, of the second stair, symbolise the state of the heart as laid bare in confession, in all its black unrighteousness. (3) The crimson hue of the porphyry is, in like manner, the fit emblem of the charity which is the spring of all true works of satisfaction, possibly also of the "blood of price" shed upon the cross, blood which was thought of partly as an expiation for the sins of the world, partly as the outward token of a burning God consuming love. Lastly, the adamant (not "diamond") threshold upon which the angel was seated, represents at once the rock-foundation of the Church's power to pardon, and the firmness of soul required in the confessor who is the instrument by which that power is exercised.

<sup>100</sup> The customary ritual of penitents on earth, the act of prostration at the feet of priest or bishop, the triple smiting on the breast (*Luke* xvii 13), representing the threefold sins of thought word, and deed (*D. C. A.* ii, 1503, 1508), is transferred to the penitence completed on the Mount of Purification.

Then on my brow he did delineate  
 With his sword's point, seven P's, and said, "When there  
 Thou go'st within, cleanse these wounds obstinate."  
 Ashes or earth dug out, left dry and bare, 115  
 Would of one colour with his garments be,  
 And from beneath them he two keys did bear.  
 Of silver one, of gold the other key;  
 First he the white, and then the yellow pled  
 Upon the door, and thus he gladdened me. 120  
 "When either of these keys in vain is tried  
 So that the lock it turns not readily,"  
 Said he to me, "this door will closed abide.  
 Costlier is one, the other bids us ply  
 More art and skill ere through the wards it turn, 125  
 For this is that which doth the knot untie  
 From Peter hold I them; from him I learn  
 Rather to ope in error than to close,  
 If only at my feet men kneel and mourn"  
 And then the sacred door he open throws, 130  
 Saying, "Enter in, but also take good heed:  
 He is cast forth who looks back as he goes."  
 And when upon their hinges did recede  
 The swivels of that consecrated door,  
 That are of metal, loud, and strong at need, 133

115 The seven P's (*peccata*) stand for the seven deadly sins of the mediæval system of penitence, which are purified in the seven circles of the Mount—Pride, Envy, Angor, Sloth, Avarice, and its opposite yet kindred sin, Prodigality (*H* vii), Gluttony, and Laviviousness. It will be noted that the classification differs from that given in *H* xi, the latter being more the poet's own deduction from the great principles of ethics as laid down by Aristotle and developed by Aquinas, the former that which was authoritatively laid down in the Church's discipline of confession. In the one case, the classification was determined from the standpoint of guilt and punishment, in the other, from that of possible discipline and amendment. Comp. Witte's essay on Dante's *Sünden System* in *D. P.* ii 121-160, (*Man* pp 99-102, *D. C. A.* s. v. *Penitence*, Chaucer's *Person's Tale*).

118 The key of gold represents the authority of the Church as absolving sin, its power to absolve coming from the "precious blood" of Christ (*1 Pet* i 18), that of silver, requiring more skill in its application, is the confessor's discernment, distinguishing the kinds and degrees of sin and the appropriate discipline for each. Both are required for the pardon and purification of the penitent, but the latter comes first in order of application. In the exercise of the power committed to it the Church leans to mercy rather than severity. The possibility of error in the angel rises from the fact that he is thought of, not, so to speak, in his angelic nature, but as the representative of the priestly confessor.

123 The warmog is substantially the same as that of *Luke* ix 62, xvii 32, *Heb* vi 4. It also is obviously addressed, not to souls in Purgatory, but to the penitent who willingly anticipates on earth the work of discipline and purification.

124 The special term used for gate (*regge*) seems to have been applied technically to the entrance into the part of the church, the porch or narthex, which, as in the ancient basilicas, was set apart for penitents (*Scart*).

Not with so sharp a note, or deep-toned roar,  
 Tarpeia opened when from it was ta'en  
 Metellus, and it stood with emptied store.  
 At the first thunderous peal I turned again,  
 And *Te Deum laudamus* seemed to hear, 140  
 In voices mingled with melodious strain :  
 And what I heard upon my mind did bear  
 Such impress as it oft is wont to take,  
 When men their singing with the organ share,  
 For now were heard, now not, the words they spake. 145

## CANTO X.

*The first Circle of the Mountain—The Sculptures on the Wall—The Cleansing  
 of the Proud.*

WHEN he had passed the threshold of the gate  
 Which souls leave little used through evil lust,  
 In that thus makes the crooked path seem straight,  
 I heard the sound of doors in closing thrust,  
 And if towards it I had turned mine eyes, 5  
 What plea for pardon of that fault were just ?

<sup>136</sup> Lucan (iii 154) is still present to the poet's mind. Cæcilius Metellus was guardian of the public treasure which was kept under the Tarpeian rock. When Cæsar crossed the Rubicon and marched on Rome, he compelled Metellus to surrender it, and then

*"Tunc rupes Tarpeia sonat, magnoque reclusas  
 Testatur stridore fores"*

Does the creaking of the hinges imply that they were rusty through long disuse ? that penitential discipline and the art of the wise confessor and guide of souls were becoming obsolete ? Comp. C. x 2, H. i 63

<sup>140</sup> The great Ambrosian Canticle was the Church's hymn of triumphant joy, sung after victories in war. Here it is the utterance of joy over the sinner that repents, and it is sung by those who are already some way advanced on the same journey as the penitent. Was there in this a reminiscence of a *Te Deum* song by Franciscan Friars when Dante was admitted as a member of the Tertiary Order ? (H. xvi 106). In any case, we may trace in il 143, 144, the memory of *Te Deum* heard in the nave of Italian churches before or after the exile. It was, we may note, always sung at Matins, and in Dante's mind would be associated with the conversion of Augustine, who, alone or with Ambrose, was its traditional author (*D. C. A.* ii. 1950).

<sup>1</sup> The "evil lust" is that which is turned away from God as the true Supreme Good, and fixed on the seeming good of the world. In most men that lust is dominant, and therefore it is true of the gate of penitence that "few there be that find it." See note on C. ix. 136.

<sup>5</sup> The meaning of C. in 131 is not forgotten. Probably Lot's wife and Orpheus mingled in Dante's memory as warning instances.

We through a rifted rock did upward rise,  
 Which now on this side, now o' the other wound,  
 E'en as a wave now rushes on, now flies.  
 "Here must some little art with us be found," 10  
 Then said my Leader, "that we take the side  
 Now here, now there, where the road windeth round."  
 Our footsteps thus with slower speed were plied,  
 So that the waned orb of the moon had gone  
 Within its lowly couch again to hide, 15  
 Ere through that needle's eye our way we won;  
 But when we reached the open and were free,  
 Where the mount backward piles itself in one,  
 I, worn and weary,—doubting, I and he  
 About our way,—we then to halt were fain 20  
 On a broad ledge more lone than deserts be;  
 And from the rim which doth the void contain,  
 On to the foot of that bank's soaring height,  
 Three human forms the measure would attain,  
 And far as eye of mine could wing its flight, 25  
 Now on the right flank, now upon the left,  
 The same thus cornice seemed still to my sight  
 By not one step had we our station left  
 When I the bank that went around did see,  
 Which had us of all power to mount bereft, 30  
 Of marble white, and so adorned to be  
 With sculptures that not Polyclete alone,  
 But Nature's self had owned its victory.

7 The undulation is not that of actual motion, but the winding annuity of the narrow, almost zigzag path. We have, as in C. iii. 49, a reminiscence of Alpine travel, possibly, as suggested by Mr. Douglas Freshfield, an expert in such matters, of travels in the Adige valley, among "limestone crags with dolomite characteristics." They must be climbed by long slopes of broken unstable boulders, or by chimneys which constantly bend or shift. What Dante fixes on is their fragility. They are treacherous, and the climber must test, before he trusts, each hand-hold (Gilbert's *Landscape in Art*, p. 36, *Alpine Journal*, vol. xi. p. 36). The use of the "needle's eye" by way of description in l. 16 determines, if there had been any doubt, its symbolical significance (*Matt.* xix. 24, *Mark* x. 25, *Luc* xvii. 25). Students will remember that that name was applied also to the narrow gateway of an Eastern city, through which no beast of burden could pass.

19 Another vivid recollection of dolomite experiences. To be weary, and not to know the way, what was this but a parable of the first stages of the penitent's progress. From the narrow path they emerge upon an even surface, a cornice, as it were, about eighteen feet in width. The term, now familiar to all Riviera travellers, is applied constantly to the terraces of the Mountain (C. xi. 29, xiii. 4, xvu. 131, *et al.*). Along its rock-wall are seen the sculptures in relief, such as Dante may have seen in the cathedrals of Italy or France, and which he describes, as with a prophetic idealism of the possibilities of that art, as furnishing, no less than painting, the *Biblia pauperum* for those who could read no other. It is, perhaps, significant, on the *signus irritant animos* principle, that the penitent's instruction begins with these object-lessons.

22 Polycletus, the Greek sculptor (*J.*, s. c. 480), specially famous for a colossal statue of

The angel who to earth the news made known  
 Of peace that men had wept for many a year, 35  
 And Heaven long barred and closed had open thrown,  
 Before us stood in sculptured form so clear,  
 In attitude that sweetest thought betrayed;  
 That he no speechless image did appear.  
 One could have sworn that he his *Ave* said, 40  
 For there too in clear imaged form was She  
 Who turned the key that high love open laid,  
 And on her mien, as written, one might see  
 'Ecce Ancilla Dei,' full as plain  
 As figures that in wax imprinted be. 45  
 "Let not one spot thy mind so long detain,"  
 Said my sweet Master, who upon that side  
 Had me which doth in man the heart contain.  
 Wherefore I turned my gaze, and so descried,  
 In rear of Mary, there towards to my right, 50  
 Where he stood who was acting as my Guide,  
 Another tale engraved on that rock's height.  
 Wherefore, past Virgil crossing, near I drew,  
 Till full and clear it stood before my sight.  
 There in the marble's self there sculptured grew 55  
 The car and kine that bare the holy chest,  
 Which o'er tasks self-assumed its terrors threw.  
 In front appeared a crowd that onward pressed,  
 In seven full choirs, who sense and sense made foes,  
 Thus "Yes, they sing," and that did "No" attest. 60

June in the Temple of Argos. Dante had probably read of him in Pliny (*N. H.* xxxiv. 8). A characteristic story is told of him which may have seemed to him a commentary on the *Lascia dar le genti* of C. v. 13. He made one statue entirely by himself. Another, of the same subject, as amateur critics advised. He exhibited the first, and all admired it, while the critics themselves abused and despised the second (*Ælian* v. 1, *H.* xiv. 8). The thought that art could excel Nature indicates the idealism of the poet who was also an artist.

35 We are in the region where the proud are cleansed, and the subjects chosen are object-lessons in humility the Annunciation the *Ecce Ancilla Dei*, expressed, like the *Ave* of the angel, in attitude (*Luke* i. 28-38), being taken as the utterance of a supreme submission to the Divine Will.

52 The scene represented is the transport of the ark from the house of Obededom the special point in it being the humility of David as contrasted with the pride of Michal (*2 Sam.* vi. 20-23). There is, however, in l. 57, a side glance at the history of Uzzah (*2 Sam.* vi. 7), as a warning against all intrusion into an office not one's own, against all usurped authority, whether on the part of pope or emperor or king. Comp. the Epist. to the Italian Cardinals, 1.

59 The "seven choirs" of Levites, which do not appear in the A. V. or Hebrew, are taken from the *Psalm* of a *Sam.* vi. 12, which follows the LXX. and agrees with Joseph (*Ant.* vii. 4). *Lunes* 60-63 are noteworthy as embodying the idea of the highest possibilities of art.

So too the smoke that from the incense rose,  
 Which there was imaged, made the nose and eyes  
 Conflict, and so to "No" and "Yes" dispose.  
 Before the blessed ark in humble guise  
 The Psalmist went, and with his loins girt, leapt, 65  
 More than a king, and less, before mine eyes.  
 And on the other side, her station kept  
 At palace window, Michal on him gazed,  
 Like woman who for scorn and shame has wept.  
 From where I stood my feet I forward raised 70  
 To scan more near another history,  
 Which behind Michal in its whiteness blazed.  
 There was wrought out the glory great and high  
 Of that great Prince of Rome whose excellence  
 Moved Gregory to his great victory, 75  
 (To Trajan, Emperor, I this praise dispense)  
 And a poor widow stood beside his rein  
 Bowed down by many a tear and grief intense :  
 And round about him, seemed it thronged by train  
 Of mounted knights, and eagles all in gold, 80  
 In the wind fluttering, glittered clear and plain :  
 It seemed among them that sad woman told  
 Her tale, "My Lord, let me thy vengeance call  
 For my son's death, that turns my heart's blood cold."  
 And he replied. "Wait thou till it befall 85  
 That I return," and she, "Nay, good my Lord,"  
 Answered, as one with grief impatient all,  
 "If thou return not." . . . "Who succeeds," his word  
 So ran, "will do it for thee." She : "The good  
 Of others will not help, thine own deferred" 90  
 Then he : "Now rest thou in more cheerful mood,  
 I, ere I stir, at once the right will do ;  
 So justice wills ; me pity hath subdued "

<sup>75</sup> The story of Trajan and the widow is told by Dio Cassius (ix 5), that of Gregory in connection with it by Joann. Diaconus (*Vita Greg.* iv 44). It is quoted by Aquinas as from Joann. Damascenus (*Summ.* iii, *Suppl.* 79, 5), occurs in the *Gesta Roman.* i 87, and was among the most popular of mediæval legends. It is quoted, e.g., in *Piers Plowman*, 6854-90. Primarily, of course, it occupies a place here as an example of humility in one who stood at the highest point of earthly greatness, but the reference to it in *Par.* xx 44, 106, seems to show that it was a tale that Dante loved to dwell on as an instance of the Divine compassion flowing out beyond its ordinary limitations.

He to whose vision nothing comes as new  
     Wrought by his skill this language visible, 96  
     Most strange to us; for here nought like we view.  
 And while with great delight my glances fell  
     On these fair emblems of humility,  
     That for their Maker's sake were dear as well,  
 "See on this side (with few steps pass they by)," 100  
     Murmured the Poet, "people manifold.  
     These will lead us to stars that rise on high "  
 Mine eyes, which still were eager to behold,  
     And see the strange new things that they desire,  
     Were then not slack to turn as I was told. 105  
 I wish not, Reader, that thou should'st retire  
     From thy good purpose when thou art made sure  
     How God doth payment of thy debt requira  
 Heed not the form of pain that sins procure ;  
     Think of what follows ; think if worst should be, 110  
     Beyond the Judgment it shall not endure.  
 Then I began : " O Master, what I see  
     Towards us moving, persons do not seem ;  
     Yet what I know not ; clear sight faileth me."  
 And he to me : " The grievous lot, I deem, 115  
     Of this their torture bows them to the ground ,  
     So that at first mine eyes sought clearer gleam.  
 But fix thy gaze , so may such search profound  
     Reveal what cometh there beneath yon stones ;  
     There canst thou see by what weight each is bound." 120

<sup>94</sup> The poet seems to have remembered that, though an ideally perfect sculpture might express a given emotion as adequately as language, it was scarcely possible that it should represent a dialogue, and therefore ascribes it to the Supreme Divine Artist, who could make even speech visible as well as audible, and so create a "new thing" for the souls of men to wonder at

<sup>101</sup> We note the significance of the fact that those who have sought the highest places on earth occupy the lowest circle of the Mount of Purification before they hear the call which bids them go up higher

<sup>104</sup> As in C ix 65, xxiv 52, we have an instance of self-analysis, and Dante recognises the eager desire to investigate new phenomena as eminently characteristic of his own nature. But for himself and for his readers there is yet another thought. The spectacle of the sufferings that are appointed as the discipline of the evil which is not incurable ought not to deter men from seeking that discipline. They are to look beyond them to what follows (*Rom* viii. 18), to the judgment of the great Day, beyond which, at the worst, they cannot pass (*Matt* xxv 34, 41). The discipline here, as throughout, is specially appropriate to the sin. Those who had lifted themselves up in pride are constrained to an enforced humility of attitude, and through that pass to lowliness of mind.

<sup>120</sup> The readings vary *Nicchia* = laments, and *puchia* = beats, i.e. smites on his breast.

O ye proud Christians, sad and weary ones,  
 Who, weakened in the vision of your mind,  
 Place your blind trust in course that backward runs !  
 Perceive ye not we are of worm-like kind,  
 Born to bring forth the angel butterfly, 125  
 That soars to Judgment, and no screen doth find ?  
 Why doth your soul lift up itself on high ?  
 Ye are as insects yet but half complete,  
 As worms in whom their growth fails utterly.  
 As to give roof or ceiling bearing meet, 130  
 As corbel fixed, a form is often seen,  
 Of which the knees up-thrust the bosom meet,  
 And by its pain untrue gives true pain keen  
 To him who on it looks, so these I saw,  
 With good heed gazing on their act and mien 135  
 True, their cramped limbs did each to other draw,  
 As they upon their back bore more or less,  
 And he who most of patience owned the law  
 "I can no more," seemed crying in distress.

<sup>124</sup> The similitude embraces both the littleness and the greatness of man's nature. Man is but as a worm (*Job* xxv 6 *Ps* xxii 7, *Isai* xli 24), but within the worm there is hidden the "angelic butterfly" of the soul, the *Psyche* of which the body is the sheath, and which must one day meet, without defence or screen, the severity of the Divine Judge. The thought may have been suggested by the appearance in ancient monuments of the butterfly as the symbol of the soul, known in Greek by the self-same name (*Müller, Arch. d. Kunst* pp. 391-399).

<sup>128</sup> Dante's use of the plural *entomata*, instead of *entoma*, for "insects," is a fair measure of his knowledge of Greek. Through lexicons, or otherwise, he had met with the word *entoma*, and took it for a neuter singular, forming its plural after the pattern of "*dogmata*."

<sup>130</sup> The description may have been suggested by the grotesque corbels and gargoyles of almost any mediæval cathedral. Ampère (p. 257) notes the fact that caryatides appear as supporting the roof of the *Loggia dei Lanzi* at Florence, but that is, if I mistake not, of later date.

<sup>138</sup> The words bring before us the extreme limit of endurance. The suffering varied according to the guilt of the sufferers, but where it was most acute and borne with supreme patience (*Gasienza* seems to unite both meanings), act and look bore witness that the soul could bear no more. That was the lesson of extreme humiliation to be learnt by those who in their lifetime had thought that there was no limit to their pride.



## CANTO XI.

*The Lord's Prayer—The Proud—Oderisi of Agubbio—Provenzan Salvani  
and Others.*

"OUR Father, Thou who dwellest in the Heaven,  
Not bound by space, but by love more intense,  
Which Thou unto Thy primal works hast given,  
Praised be Thy Name and Thine omnipotence  
By every creature, as 'tis meet and right 5  
To render thanks to Thy sweet effluence.  
Upon us may Thy kingdom's peace alight,  
To which we cannot of ourselves arise,  
Unless it come, with all our reason's might.  
As of their will Thine angels sacrifice 10  
Make to Thee, while their lips 'Hosanna' say,  
So may men offer all their will's device !

<sup>1</sup> The paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer with which the Canto opens comes with a special significance as part of the discipline of the proud. They have to become as little children (*Matt* xviii 3), and to learn their *Paternoster* once again in all the fulness of its meaning. On two other grounds also it claims a special notice—(1) in the contrast between its exceeding beauty and the jejune-ness of the apocryphal paraphrase which has been ascribed to Dante (given in vol. ii.), (2) as showing how the prayer was interpreted by medieval theologians, and with what thoughts Dante himself prayed it.

<sup>2</sup> The thought was at once biblical (1 *K* viii 27) and scholastic (Aquinas *Summa* i 2, 102, 4). Dante returns to it in *Par* xiv 30. The words that follow are meant to reconcile the apparent localisation implied in the words "which art in Heaven" with the metaphysical conception of the Infinite and Omnipresent God is there, in the empyrean sphere of perfect peace, not by local limitation, but because His love is manifested most in the heavens, which, with the angels as their inhabitants, are the "first works" of His creative power.

<sup>3</sup> The "effluence" (Ital. *vapore*, from the description of Wisdom in the *Vulgate* of *Wisdom* vii 25, as the "*vapor virtutis Dei*") is that of the Love manifested in creation, LXX. gives *aratus*.

<sup>4</sup> The insertion of "peace" is eminently characteristic. The Epistle which bears the name of Fra Ilario is now commonly rejected as spurious, but in its statement that, when Dante was questioned at the monastery of Il Corvo as to what he sought, his answer was "Peace, peace," there is probably the echo of a fact. Here he lays stress on the fact that it must "*come*" to men, that no intellect however lofty, can otherwise attain to it.

<sup>5</sup> The Heaven in which the will of God is done is not the material heaven in which that will reigns as law, but that of the angelic orders. As spiritual beings, their obedience is the obedience of will, and in their hosannas of praise and their ministries they ever offer up the sacrifice of a will perfectly at one with God's, and this, though in men the sacrifice may not be, even in the holiest, without some sense of struggle ("Not as I will, but as Thou wilt," *Matt* xxvi 39), is the pattern to which we pray to be conformed.

<sup>6</sup> With all the deeper and devouter thinkers of Christianity, Dante interprets the "daily bread," not of "common food," but of the spiritual "manna," the bread that "cometh down from Heaven" (*John* vi 50). Only in that sense, indeed, could the words have any meaning as spoken by the souls in Purgatory. The "*panem substantialem*" of the *Vulgate* of *Matt* vi 12 was probably in his mind, striking the keynote of his interpretation. The thought of the "manna" naturally suggests the "wilderness" of i 14. Without the strength for progress which that bread gives our motion is necessarily retrograde. Comp. 1 *Kings* xix 7.

Our daily manna give to us to-day,  
 Without which whose through this desert drear  
 Journeys, goes back, though pressing on his way. 15  
 And as the trespass we from others bear  
 We forgive each, so, Lord, do Thou forgive  
 Of bounty, nor to count our merits care.  
 Our virtue, which so soon doth harm receive,  
 Put not to peril with our ancient foe, 20  
 But from his evil sting deliverance give.  
 This final prayer, dear Lord, from us doth flow,  
 Not for ourselves, for we no longer need,  
 But for their sakes whom we have left below."  
 So praying for themselves and us 'God speed!' 25  
 Those souls went on their way beneath their weight,  
 As oft in dreams such evil fancies breed,  
 Round still and round, in anguish disparate,  
 And wearied all, along the bank they wound,  
 Purging the darkness thick of Earth's estate. 30  
 If there for us such pleadings aye abound,  
 What here for them may those or do or say,  
 In whom the blest root of good-will is found?  
 Well may we help them wash those stains away,  
 Which they bore hence, that so, made clean and free, 35  
 Up to yon starry sphere they take their way.

15 We are to forgive those who wrong us without thinking of their merits. Only on that ground can we pray that God will not take our merits as the measure of His pardon.

20 The paraphrase has the interest of showing that Dante followed the Schoolmen and Fathers—and they were many—who saw in the Greek of the Lord's Prayer, as the "*Revised Version*" has done, the meaning "Deliver us from the Evil One."

23 The souls that were waiting for admission to Purgatory were still subject to temptations (C. viii 98). Once within the gates and the Tempter ceases to have any power to hurt them. For them the last clause is an intercession for those left on earth. In all that follows, as in what goes before, we have to remember that the sin of pride was that which Dante recognised as his own besetting temptation (l. 73, C. xiv 136). He had found in the Lord's Prayer that which was the most effective charm against it.

27 The actual burdens of life were too feeble for the comparison which Dante sought, and he has to fall back upon what has been called the *incubus*, the nightmare sense of a crushing and overwhelming weight, more poetically, in German, the *Alpdrücken*, which men feel in dreams.

30 The thought is as an echo of Aug. in Ps. vi, "*Videte fimum superbie similem, ascendentem, tumescentem, vanequentem*."

31 The thought expressed is that of mediæval theology. Not only the souls in Paradise, but those in Purgatory, pray for those they love on earth. How much more should those on earth, who can not only pray, but offer the sacrifice of the altar and their deeds of mercy as prevailing pleas, be eager to intercede for them? (Aquin. *Summ. P.* iii, *Suppl.* 76, 9.)

" Ah, so may justice soon and charity  
 Disburden you, that ye with wings may move  
 That shall uplift you where ye seek to be !  
 Show us which path towards the stairs will prove 40  
 The shortest way ; if there be more than one,  
 Then that which slopes less steeply from above  
 For he who comes with me is nigh undone  
 By Adam's flesh, wherewith he stands arrayed,  
 And 'gainst his will, with laggard steps goes on." 45  
 The words that were to this in answer said,  
 Which he had spoken whom I came behind,  
 The quarter whence they came but half displayed,  
 But this was said . " Ye on the right shall find,  
 If ye come with us, pass accessible, 50  
 Where living man his way may safely wind ,  
 And if this stone were not a hindrance fell,  
 Which on me lies to tame my stiff neck's pride,  
 And me to keep my face down doth compel,  
 Hum, who yet liveth and his name doth hide, 55  
 I fain would see,—perchance, a well-known face,—  
 Whose heart would pity for my woes provide.  
 A Latin was I, of great Tuscan race,  
 Guglielm' Aldobrandeschi called me son ,  
 I know not if his name your memory trace. 60  
 My ancient blood and brave deeds nobly done  
 By my forefathers, me so haughty made,  
 That I forgot our Mother is but one,  
 And towards all men such proud scorn displayed,  
 I died through it, as all Siennese know, 65  
 And every child in Campagnatic glade.

<sup>37</sup> Virgil, representing human wisdom, has no adequate experience of the processes of spiritual purification, and has to apply to those who have been taught by experience, which, of all the ways of conquering pride, is the least difficult for human weakness. As the sequel shows, that way is found in discerning the consequence of that sin as seen in others, and so learning partly by example, partly by sympathy.

<sup>38</sup> The first speaker is Umberto Aldobrandeschi, Count of Santafore (C vi 112), in the Maremma of the Siennese territory. The family were Ghibellines, took part with Henry VII, and fought under Uguccione della Faggiuola at the battle of Montecatini (*Vill* vi 71, ix 47). Here the special sin was the pride of ancestry. For a fuller treatment of that vice, see *Conv* iv and the *Canz.* which it expands. The Counts of Santafore were in perpetual conflict with Siena on questions of jurisdiction. The Siennese invaded the castle of Campagnatico, and Umberto was killed in a sortie, or, according to another account, murdered in his bed by assassins who had been hired by the Siennese authorities (*Mural.* xv 28).

Umberto I, nor did that pride work woe  
 To me alone, hut all my kindred too  
 Into sore trouble it had power to throw.  
 And here this weight must needs my pride subdue 70  
 So long, until that God be satisfied,  
 Here 'mong the dead, since life failed that to do."  
 I, as I listened, hent, my face to hide,  
 And one of them, not he who to us spake,  
 Writhed 'neath the weight to which his limbs were tied,  
 He saw me, knew me; from his lips there brake, 75  
 As he did strain his eager gaze, a cry,  
 While I, all bent, with them my way did take.  
 "Art thou not Oderisi?" then said I,  
 "The pride of Gubbio, glory of that art 80  
 In Paris known as limner's mystery?"  
 "Brother," said he, "more pleasure gives the chart  
 Which Franco of Bologna now doth paint.  
 His now is all the honour, mine but part,  
 My courteous praise would have been far more faint 85  
 While I was living, so by longings made  
 For eminence, on which my heart was bent.  
 Of that foul pride the forfeit here is paid,  
 Yet had I not attained this place and hour,  
 Save that, with power to sin, to God I prayed 90  
 Oh, empty glory of all human power,  
 How little green doth on its height endure,  
 Save when dull times that follow darkly lour!

<sup>73</sup> The attitude is not merely that of attention, but expresses the poet's consciousness that he himself was a sharer in the sin. Of that pride of ancestry, mingled with the feeling that it was a weakness, we find traces even in *Par.* xvi. 1-3.

<sup>79</sup> The next speaker illustrates another form of pride, that of art, and in so doing brings before us the *Origines* of the earlier renaissance. Oderigi of Agubbio (*A. circ.* 1270-90), in the duchy of Urbino, was famous as a painter of miniatures in MS. ornamentations at Bologna and Rome, where he worked for the Pope, and, according to one account, was the teacher of Cimabue at Florence. In the mention of "illuminating," as the special term used at Paris (the Italian verb was *miniare*, from *minium* = a red pigment, hence also "miniature"), we have probably another reminiscence of Dante's residence in that city (*Par.* x. 136). *Phil.* quotes from the records of the Inquisition at Carcasson in 1308 as the earliest instance of the Lat. "*illuminatum*" in this sense. Dante, with the philological taste shown in *V. E.* i. 9, 10, notes the appearance of a new word. I use the word "limner" as derived from *illuminare*.

<sup>83</sup> Franco of Bologna was a painter in the same Byzantine style as Oderisi, but was held to have improved on his predecessor. A picture now in the Palazzo Ercolani of Bologna is ascribed to him, but its authenticity has been questioned (Kugler, *Kunst Gesch.* 5th ed. ii. 193; Barlow (p. 216).

<sup>84</sup> "With power to sin," i. e., while still living. If there had been no such power, there could have been no freedom of the will, and therefore no true conversion.

<sup>91</sup> Here, also, Dante recognised his own likeness. He had the scholar's, the artist's pride, as well as that of birth.

<sup>92</sup> The thought shows a singular insight into the conditions of human fame as far as art is

Once Cimabue seemed to hold full sure  
 His own 'gainst all in art: now Giotto bears 95  
 The palm, and this man's fame doth that obscure.  
 So too one Guido from the other tears  
 The praise of speech, and one doth live, perchance,  
 Who to drive both from out their nest prepares.  
 The world's best fame no higher doth advance 100  
 Than breath of wind, whose fickle gusts deceive,  
 And changing side, leaves name to change and chance.

concerned. To a progressive age each artist and poet eclipses his predecessor. It is only in a period of decadence that men look back upon the past and say that "there were giants in those days."

<sup>94</sup> Giovanni Cimabue of Florence (*b. circ. 1240, d. 1302*). Pictures by him are to be seen, as they were probably seen by Dante, in the churches of S. Maria Novella and Santa Croce at Florence, and in the Upper Church of Assisi, exhibiting the first traces of liberation from the traditional routine of Byzantine art and the conventionalities of that of the illuminators. The delight of the Florentines at the first of these showed itself in a solemn procession of exuberant joy, which was believed to have made the quarter in which the painter lived known to all future time as the Borgo Allegri. Vasari says that there was in his day an epitaph on Cimabue in the Duomo of Florence presenting a striking parallelism with Dante—

*Credidit ut Cimabue pictura castra tenere,  
 Sic tenuit vivus, nunc tenet astra poli.* —Linda: 1. 340-345

But, as the date is doubtful, it is uncertain which is an echo of the other.

<sup>95</sup> The fact that Giotto was in the inner circle of Dante's friends gives a special interest to this mention of his name. Born in 1267 (Vas., but others name 1265), as the son of Bondone of Vespignano near Florence, he began to show his powers of art at the age of ten, while keeping his father's flock. Cimabue, struck by seeing a picture of a sheep which he had drawn upon a stone, took him as his pupil, and soon, as Dante says, he excelled his master. Dante, though older, may have been his fellow pupil, and learnt to paint angels (*P. A. c. 35*) as he painted them. At any rate, his work connects itself with the poet's life. In the Bargello of Florence, once the Chapel of the Podestà Palace, there is the picture, discovered under many coatings of whitewash in 1840, in which there are portraits of Dante, Bruocetto Latini, and Corso Donati. Other pictures are seen in the Santa Croce and the Church del Carmine. In the Church of Assisi he completed the series which had been begun by Cimabue, and these include notably (1) the Marriage of S. Francis with Poverty, of which Dante tells in *Par. xi*, and (2) the gathering of the Saints' disciples, among whom, as said in the note on *H. xvi. 106*, he has introduced his poet friend. In the series of pictures in the Arena Chapel of Padua, he is said to have been assisted by that friend's counsel. Other works were executed for Boniface VIII., the portrait of the Pope in St. John Lateran, and the *Navicella* in St. Peter's (probably when Dante was with him in Rome in the year of Jubilee, 1300), and Clement V. at Avignon, and as an architect he left the Campanile at Florence as a perpetual inheritance.

<sup>96</sup> The earlier of the two Guidos has been commonly identified with G. Guinicelli of Bologna (*d. 1265*), of whom Dante speaks as his father in poetry (*C. xxvi. 97*), noblest and greatest among the early poets of Italy (*Conv. iv. 20. P. E. i. 13*), the later with G. Cavalcante, the poet's personal friend (*H. x. 58*), who was among the men of letters to whom he had addressed the first sonnet of the *L. N.*, to whom, indeed, the whole book was dedicated. Other names, such as Guido della Colonna (*P. circ. 1250*) and Guittone of Arezzo (*C. xxiv. 56, xxvi. 124*), have been suggested, but on grounds that are hardly strong enough to prevail against the general consensus of commentators. It is scarcely probable that Dante would have used the name Guido for one whom he elsewhere (as above) calls Guittone.

<sup>97</sup> Are the words, like those of *H. iv. 102, xxv. 94-97, Par. xvii. 118*, the utterance of a conscious estimate by Dante of his own powers? Was he, that is, tempted to a boastful pride in the very act of describing its punishment? It may be so, but if so, it is as with a certain grave irony which claims only the passing glory of an idle day, and anticipates only, for himself as for others, the utter oblivion which time ultimately brings to all that belongs to the fashion of the world. It is quite so probable, however, that the words may have been written simply as a wide generalisation without any reference to himself. Comp. *C. xxvi. 98*.

What greater glory thine, if age bereave  
 Thee of thy flesh, than if thou then hadst died,  
 Ere thou thy infant prattling erst didst leave, 105  
 When thousand years have passed? Yet that, beside  
 The eternal, is as twinkle of an eye  
 To sphere that slowest turns where Heaven spreads wide  
 Of him who treads before me tardily  
 His onward way, all Tuscany did ring; 110  
 Now scarce a whisper 'neath Siena's sky  
 Is heard, where he was lord, when fate did bring  
 Rout on the rago of Florence, then as high  
 As now she is in whoredom grovelling  
 Your high repute, as bloom of grass, doth fly, 115  
 Which comes and goes, and he doth mar its grace  
 Through whom from earth it burgeons veridantly."  
 And I to him · "Thy words in my heart trace  
 Lessons that humble, and bring low my pride,  
 But who is he that in thy speech had place?" 120  
 "Salvani Provenzano," he replied,  
 "And he is here, because with pride unblest  
 He sought to rule o'er all Siena wide.  
 Thus is he gone, and wandering knows no rest,  
 Since his death hour, such forfeit here is paid 125  
 By him who there in daring has transgressed."  
 "And if each soul remain below," I said,  
 "Who waits till life's last verge ere he repent,  
 Nor may his upward journey yet be made

103 The original gives *peppo* and *dinds* as the infantile equivalents for *pave* and *denari*. The thought is, of course, that the night of forgetfulness falls alike on the long life crowned with honour and on that cut short in merest childhood. Within a thousand years, *à fortiori* in that eternity in which a thousand years are but as the twinkling of an eye, all will alike be forgotten. The sphere of l. 108 is that of the fixed stars, revolving in 30,000 years.

109 An instance of the transitoriness of fame, Dante selects Provenzan Salvani, of whom, but for this mention of him Italy and the world would have known scarcely anything. Once he had been chief among the Ghibellines, proud and haughty, Governor of Siena when the Florentines were defeated at Montaperti. In 1260, when the Florentines in their turn defeated the Siennese, he was taken and beheaded (*Vill* vii 31, *Malisp* c. 202).

112 The poet's judgment on the recent history of his city is consciously mixed. In the predominance of the Guelphs he saw a time of madness, but even that was a time of greatness, as compared with the debasement to which she had been reduced by the factions of later years.

113 The sun to which the green grass owes its life dries it up. Time, which gives birth to fame, is fatal to its endurance.

118 We note once again the tone of penitent confession which militates against the assumption that l. 98 is to be interpreted as a prophecy of the poet's own fate.

120 The question rises out of Balacqua's statement in C. iv 127-135, and implies that Salvani had delayed his repentance to the time of death, and had not been helped by the prayers of others. How then had he come to the first circle of the Mountain when barely thirty years had passed?

Unless true prayers their gracious help have lent, 130  
 Until he pass the time he lived on earth,  
 By what great bounty was he hither sent?"  
 "He, when he lived in state of loftiest worth,  
 Of his free will, in fair Siena's plain,  
 Stood forth, nor let the sense of shame have birth, 135  
 And there, to free his dear friend from the pain,  
 Which wore his life in Charles's prison drear,  
 So acted that he trembled in each vein,  
 No more I'll say, and know I speak not clear,  
 But those thy fellows soon will thee apprise, 140  
 So that to thee full plain it shall appear  
 This deed released him from those boundaries"

### CANTO XII.

*The Sculptures on the Pavement—The Angel of the Second Circle—The First P erased.*

WITH even pace, like oxen at the plough,  
 I went with that soul in his sore distress,  
 As long as my sweet Tutor would allow ;  
 But when he said, "Leave him, and onward press ;  
 For here 'tis good our barque, with sail and oar, 8  
 To push with all the strength which we possess,"

<sup>133</sup> The answer to the question is found in the fact that in the closing years of his life Salvani had made a great act of humiliation, which, in strict accordance with mediæval theology, was accepted as a satisfaction. His friend Vinca or Vinca, who had fought under Conradin at Tagliacozzo (II xxviii 17), had been taken prisoner by Charles of Anjou, who demanded a ransom of two thousand florins. Salvani, on hearing this, having no money of his own, took his place in the Campo, or Hippodrome, of Siena, and begged money for the purpose from all who passed by till he obtained the sum required. Charity, in this case, had covered a multitude of sins.

<sup>139</sup> The words, like the memorable lines of *Par* xvii 58-60, lay bare one of the keenest wounds of Dante's life. He knew that "trembling in every vein," that sense of humiliation which attended the act of giving alms, not as the member of a religious order, but as a personal favour (comp also *Conv* i 3), and he had found no friend like Salvani to relieve him of his burden.

<sup>1</sup> The comparison presents so striking a parallelism to Homer (*II* xiii 704), that, if we had had evidence that Dante had read the *Iliad*, we should have been justified in treating it as a deliberate reproduction. What is indicated is, that the poet accepts the discipline of humility, and becomes a sharer in bearing Odysseus's burden.

<sup>2</sup> The word "tutor" or "pedagogue" is probably chosen with a special reference to the *Vulg* of Gal. iii 24. Dante had found in Virgil a "schoolmaster" (I give the familiar English because familiar) "leading him to Christ."

<sup>4</sup> The lesson thus enforced is in accordance with that of all masters of the spiritual life. Each must advance as rapidly as he can. The pilgrim could not really lighten the burden of

Then, as when men move onward, I once more  
 Rose up in body, though my thoughts were still  
 Downcast and humble, as they were before.  
 I had moved on, and followed with good will 10  
 The steps of my dear Master, and we twain  
 Showed how alert we were to climb the hill,  
 When he said to me, "Look thou down again ,  
 Good will it be, to speed thee on thy way,  
 To see what bed doth now thy feet sustain. 15  
 As oft, that they in memory may stay,  
 Over the buried dead their tombs on earth  
 What they aforetime were, in form portray,  
 Whence oftentimes to our weeping comes new birth,  
 Through the sharp sting of poignant memory, 20  
 Which spurs on none but souls of loving worth ,  
 So saw I there, but clearer to the eye,  
 According to the Artist's skill designed,  
 What'er of path-rim up the mount did lie.  
 There I saw him, whom we created find 25  
 Noblest of creatures, falling down from heaven,  
 On one side, as though lightning flash had shined .  
 I saw Briareus, by the sharp dart riven  
 Celestial, lie upon the other side,  
 And in cold death his weight to earth was driven. 30  
 Thymbræus, Pallas, Mars, I saw beside,  
 Armed as of yore around their sire divine,  
 Gaze on the limbs of giants far and wide :

his fellow sufferer, and a prolongation of outward sympathy might delay his own progress. What was needed, and what had been actually gained, was humility of soul, not the bodily act, which was but its outward symbol.

15-24 The sculptures which represented patterns of humility had been upright, fixed on the rock wall. Those which represent the punishment of pride are appropriately, like monumental slabs, placed upon the ground, so that men may tread on them. Most of the instances—biblical and classical examples, being, as usual, intermingled—tell their own tale. For the primal glory of Lucifer see *H* xxxiv 18, for Briareus, *H* xxxi 98. Thymbræus (the guardian deity of Thymbra in the Froud) stands, as in *Æn* in 85, *Georg.* iv 323, for Apollo. For the story of Niobe, who boasted against Latona of her beauty, her ancestry, her numerous offspring, see *Met* vi 180-301. The famous Niobe sculpture, it may be noted, was not known to Dante, having been discovered at Rome in 1583. For that of Arachne, who challenged Minerva to a trial of skill in embroidery and was changed into a spider, see *Met* vi 30-145. For that of Alcmaeon, the son of Amphiaraus (*H* xx 24), and Erphyile, who slew his mother after learning that she had received a necklace from Polynece as the price of her treachery in disclosing her husband's hiding place, when he, knowing that the attack of the Seven against Thebes would end fatally for him, sought to conceal himself and so escape taking part in it (*Stat. Theb.* ii 272, *Met* ix 407), for Tomyris, Queen of the Scythians, who uttered the words quoted as she cast the head of Cyrus into a vessel filled with blood (*Herod.* i 92), for Holofernes (*Judith* xiv 4-16). Troy (I 61) was the city, Ilium the citadel or rock-fortress. *Faur.* (i 233) suggests that Can Grande's picture-gallery in Verona may have furnished hints for the suggestive lists of subjects.



At foot of his great work these eyes of mine  
     Saw Nimrod dazed, and looking on the host      35  
     Whose pride in Shinar did with his combine :  
 And thee too, Niobe, on that drear coast  
     I saw depicted, with thy dolorous eyes,  
     With children seven and seven on each side lost !  
 There, on thine own sword fallen, thy form lies,      40  
     O Saul ! as when in death on Gilboa's height,  
     That never more knew rain nor dewy skies !  
 O mad Arachne, thou didst meet my sight,  
     Half spider now, sad 'mid the tangled rows  
     Of that famed work which wrought thine evil plight !      45  
 O Rehoboam, there thy likeness shows  
     No threatening aspect, but, o'ercome with dread,  
     A chariot bears thee, e'er pursued by foes  
 There the hard pavement that our feet did tread  
     Showed how Alcmaeon made his mother know      50  
     How dear the luckless gauds for which she bled  
 'Twas shown how traitorous sons themselves did throw  
     Upon Sennacherib, who in worship stood,  
     And left him there, as lie in death lay low ;  
 It showed the carnage and the example crude      55  
     In Tomyris, when she to Cyrus said,  
     " For blood thou thirsted'st, thee I glut with blood "

There too it showed how those Assyrians fled,  
     In foul defeat, when Holofernes fell,  
     And all the remnant in that slaughter dread      60  
 In dust and caves I saw Troy's citadel ,  
     O Itho, how humbled did appear  
     Thy form and features there ensculptured well !  
 What master of the brush and style was there,  
     Who traced out every lineament and mien      65  
     Which subtlest genius, wondering, would revere ?  
 Alive the living, dead the dead were seen  
     Who sees the truth no better sees than I  
     Saw, while my gaze towards the ground did lean

64 The two words are used with artistic precision. The *stylus* was a metal instrument which traced the outlines of the *statuettes*, afterwards filled in with colour by the brush. Here, as in C. x. 37, 60, we have the artist's anticipation of a perfect development of art, which should make it as the living counterpart of Nature.

Now wax ye proud, and walk with haughty eye, 70  
 Ye sons of Eve, and never bend your head,  
 So as to see how ill your path doth lie.  
 O'er more than half the hill had passed our tread,  
 And more by far the Sun his course had spent  
 Than we with mind engrossed had reckon'd, 75  
 When he who walked before me all intent,  
 Began. "Now lift thy head; no time indeed  
 Have we to go! on meditation bent.  
 See there an angel who doth quicker speed  
 To come towards us; see, how now doth turn 80  
 The day's sixth handmaid, from her service freed.  
 Due reverence let thine acts and features learn,  
 That it may please him upward us to guide.  
 Think this day's brightness never will return"  
 Well knew I now that counsel oft applied 85  
 To lose no time in matter such as this  
 His words for me no meaning dark could hide.  
 Then came to us that Being bright with bliss  
 Arrayed in white, a glory in his face  
 Tremulous as a star at daybreak is 90  
 He oped his arms, he oped his wings in space,  
 And said, "Come hither, lo! the steps are near,  
 With nimble feet ye now may mount apace.  
 But few are they who thus my summons hear.  
 O race of mortals, born on high to soar, 95  
 Why fall ye down before a little air?"  
 He led us where the rock made open door,  
 And there he beat his wings my brow upon,  
 Then promised me full safe a journey o'er.

<sup>70</sup> The rest of the induction is embodied in the keen incisive irony which was Dante's favourite weapon

<sup>81</sup> The sixth handmaiden of the day is the sixth hour, i.e., noon was already passed. Two hours and a half had been spent in the region of the proud

<sup>82</sup> It is not without interest to note that the Roman service for the sixth hour contains a section of *Ps. cxix*, which includes the words "*Tempus facienti, Domine ad omnia mandata tua dirigebar* (vv. 126, 128)

<sup>83</sup> The angel is the guardian of the second circle and the steep rock path that leads to it. The special description seems taken from *Matt. xxviii. 3*, *Mark. xvi. 5*

<sup>84</sup> Commentators are divided on the question whether the words that follow are to be taken as forming part of the address of the angel or as the poet's reflection thereon. The "little wind" which hinders most men from obeying the heavenly call is the "*aura popularis*," the breath of fame (*C. xi. 100*), which has so terrible a fascination for them

<sup>85</sup> The act implies the obliteration of the first of the seven *Ps.* (*C. ix. 112*). The penitent was at last cured of the sin of pride, which he had recognised as that which most easily beset him

As on the right, up to the hill, whereon 100  
     Is set the church commanding from on high  
     The well-ruled city, easily is won,  
 O'er Rubaconte, on the steep slope nigh,  
     By means of steps constructed long ago,  
     When registers and standards safe might lie, 105  
 So with more ease our steps did upward go  
     On the steep bank which from the next round fell  
     But the high rock on each side close did show.  
 There, as we turned our bodies, with sweet spell  
     *Beati pauperes spiritu* did flow, 110  
     By voices sung in mode ineffable.  
 Ah me! how diverse do these passes show  
     From those of Hell, for here with anthems clear  
     Men enter, there with wailing and with woe.  
 Up by the holy steps we then did bear, 115  
     And far more easy seemed it then to me  
     Than on the plain it did before appear  
 I therefore "Master, say what burdens flee  
     Away from off me, that no weariness  
     Comes on me from our prompt activity?" 120

100 The church is that of S. Miniato at Florence, which is ironically described as "well-governed." Rubaconte was the bridge now known as the Ponte alle Grazie, from a chapel on it dedicated to the Madonna delle Grazie, but in Dante's time named after a Podestà who had laid its first stone in 1237 (*Vill* vi 26, *Malisp* c 129). The ascent from the bridge to the church has, within the last few years, been modernised, the old steps having been replaced by a wide stone staircase, with balustrades and landings. The "right hand" implies, however, a somewhat different arrangement from the present, in which the steps go straight up.

105 The line refers to two frauds which had furnished materials in their time for *causes celebres* but which it is scarcely needful to retail at length. In the one case an advocate, Baldo Agugione, a zealous Ghibelline, had, in the interest of his client Niccolò Acciaiuoli, erased some entries in the public records, by which the latter was involved in a charge of the subornation of false evidence (*Dino* C 1 43, ed 1862). In the other, one of the citizens of Florence was charged with having falsified the scales which he used in selling salt, or, in another story, in the measure in which he sold his wine, and so secured a dishonest gain. The words, however, imply the prevalence of such frauds, and may, perhaps, be taken generally.

110 The beatitude appears appropriate to the circle of the proud which the pilgrim is leaving, rather than that of the envious on which he is about to enter. It fails, as it were, the completion of the first step of the soul's purification. Elsewhere (*C* xv 37, xvii 67, xix 49, xxii 1, xxiv 157, xxvii 7), the beatitudes are always uttered by the warder-angels of the respective circles. Here the plural seems to imply (we are not told whose voices were heard) that the spirits in the first or second circle, or both, at last joined as in chorus.

112 A reminiscence of many passages in the *Inferno* (ii 22, iv 26, 27, v 25, vi 19, vii 26), an anticipation of many in the *Purgatorio* (see last note).

117 The reader will note the significance of the fact that, pride being conquered, it is easier to climb the steep ascent than to walk on the level ground. The secret of that greater ease is explained in Virgil's answer. Sin is the one great impediment. In proportion as that is conquered, progress requires less effort. *Vires acquirit eundo* is true of the pilgrim's progress. When the victory is complete it will be simply a joy and a delight.

He answered : " When the P'e that yet do press  
 Thy brow, as half-obliterated shown,  
 Like this wiped out, shall one by one grow less,  
 Thy feet, to good-will so obedient grown,  
 Not only shall fatigue no longer know, 126  
 But their delight in pressing on shall own."  
 Then did I act as men who onward go  
 With something on their heads they know not what,  
 Save that the nods of friends suspicion sow,  
 Wherefore their hands help, searching out the spot, 130  
 And seek and find, nor will that task forego,  
 For which the eyesight's power sufficeth not,  
 And, with my right hand's fingers stretched out, lo !  
 I found but six the letters that erewhile  
 The great Key-bearer on my brow traced so : 135  
 My Master looked and met me with a smile.

### CANTO XIII

*The Second Circle—The Envious—Their Discipline—Sapia of Siena*

WE had thus reached the summit of the stair,  
 Where narrows yet a second time the hill,  
 Which, as 'tis climbed, doth each one's sin repair ;  
 There also doth a cornice circle still  
 Around the slope, as did the former one, 5  
 Save that more sharply this its arc doth fill.  
 Shade there is none, nor sculpture shows thereon,  
 So bare the bank seems, so seems bare the way,  
 With but the livid colour of the stone.

<sup>127</sup> Over and above the vividness with which a common incident in daily life is described as analogous to a spiritual experience, we have the suggestive thought that the true humility is unconscious that it is humble. The pilgrim does not know that the 'P' of the sin of pride has been erased.

<sup>5</sup> We have entered on the cornice of the envious. Its sharper curve results from the gradual decrease of the diameter of the conical mountain.

<sup>7</sup> The word "shade" has been taken in many different senses, as that of trees, as meaning "soul," as equivalent to an outline or *enfaglie* design. Of these, the last is beyond all question the most satisfactory. What is meant is, that this cornice had no historical illustrations like those described in the two previous Cantos.

<sup>9</sup> The "livid" colour is, as in Ovid's description of the House of Eury (Met. ii. 761-768), the symbol of that sin.

"If here, for souls of whom to ask we stay," 10  
 The Poet reasoned, "cause have we to fear,  
 Lest this our choice should cause too much delay."  
 Then turned his fixed eye on the sun's light clear,  
 And of his right side did a centre make,  
 And round him moved his left as he stood there 15  
 "O pleasant Light in whom I trust, and take  
 This our new path, do thou our footsteps guide,  
 As we would guidance here within partake ;  
 Thou warm'st the world, thy beams shine far and wide ;  
 Unless some good cause bid the contrary, 20  
 Thy rays should ever be our leaders tried "  
 What space with us a measured mile doth lie,  
 That had we there already travelled through,  
 In briefest time, through will's prompt energy.  
 And now the sound of souls that towards us flew, 25  
 We heard, although we saw not those who spoke,  
 And us, with kindly words, to Love's feast drew.  
 And the first voice that through the silence broke  
 "*Vinum non habent*" said, in clearest tone,  
 And passed behind and oft the echoes woke. 30  
 And ere its sound was lost, through distance gone,  
 Another passing, "Lo, Orestes I,"  
 Cried out, and he too stayed not, but went on

<sup>10</sup> In the first circle the pilgrims had waited till the souls that were journeying onward had shown them the way. Here it is the doom of the envious, who had looked grudgingly on the progress of others not to move onward, but to stand still. Virgil therefore does not wait to ask his way, but looks to the Sun, the symbol of Divine illumination, working through Nature, the "Light that lighteth every man" (*H* i 17, *Par* xxv 54) for guidance. As it was now afternoon and they were looking southwards, they had the sun on their right and the movement described indicates that they turned their steps in that direction, ever to the right in Purgatory, as ever to the left in Hell. To look to the sun was in accordance with Cato's counsel (*C* i 107).

<sup>20</sup> The words are sometimes explained as referring to the subjective hindrances to inward illumination presented by man's sin and ignorance. It is, I think, more natural to say that they point to a special revelation of the Divine Will, which, when it comes, supercedes the guidance of the light that comes through Nature. We may compare Dryden's lines in the *Religio Laici*, in which he says of Reason that it "so dies and so dissolves in supernatural light."

<sup>25</sup> The voices are those of angels. The special form of the discipline of the envious prevents their being instructed by the eye (l. 70) and their meditations are therefore guided by what they hear, as inviting them to the table of that Love which had been conspicuous by its absence in their lives.

<sup>30</sup> Why was the text chosen for the implied meditation on the sin of envy? We must believe that Dante had from it worked out a sermon for himself and the main thought of such a sermon would have been the contrast between the satisfaction felt by the envious in the misfortune and chams of others and the considerate tenderness of the Virgin Mother, who reported the failure of the wine at the marriage feast of Cana (*John* ii 1-10) only that the want might be supplied before others had discovered it.

<sup>35</sup> The words recall a memorable incident in the friendship of Orestes and Pylades, where

"O Father," said I, "what means each strange cry?"  
 And as I asked, behold a third did sound, 35  
 And spake aloud, "Love ye your enemy."  
 Then my good Master: "In this circle's round  
 Is scourged the guilt of envy; so the cords  
 Of that same scourge by love itself are bound.  
 The curb must echo with far other words. 40  
 Thou, so I deem, wilt hear it soon, ere yet  
 Thou reach the Pass which pardon full affords.  
 But through the air gaze thou with nought to let,  
 And thou shalt see what folk before us lies,  
 And each one close against the rock is set." 45  
 Then wider than before I oped my eyes.  
 I looked in front and spirits saw arrayed  
 In cloaks that with the rock did harmonise.  
 And when a few steps onward we had made,  
 I heard their cry, "O Mary, for us pray," 50  
 Cry, "Michael, Peter, yea, and all Saints, aid."  
 I deem that on the earth none wends his way  
 Of heart so hard as not to thrill with pain,  
 Through pitying those who next before me lay  
 For when I did a greater nearness gain, 55  
 So that their acts and men came clear in sight,  
 The heavy sorrow did my sad eyes drain

the latter had feigned to be the former in order that he might die to save his friend, while Orestes in his turn came forward and proclaimed who he was. Dante had probably read the story in *Cic de Amic* 7, to which he had turned for comfort in his great sorrow (*Conv* ii 13). In that self sacrifice of reciprocated love there was the truest antidote to envy.

<sup>36</sup> Love finds its crown and consummation in the words of the Divine Friend (*Matt* v 44). How could one who had grasped those words in their fulness envy the small advantages of others?

<sup>37</sup> The discipline of the sin of envy begins, like that of the sin of pride, with examples of the opposite grace. There must be the stimulation of the capacity of loving—the "expulsive and impulsive power of a new affection" (*Chalmers*). On the sin of envy, see *C* xv 49 *H* vi 49; *Par* ix 127. The work which completes the cure is found in examples of the malignity and punishment of the sin. The "Pass of Pardon" is the place where the second P on the poet's brow is cancelled, as in *C* xii 98. The parable of the "whip" and the "curb" is given fully in *Conv* iv 26.

<sup>48</sup> The colour of the stone, it will be remembered, was the livid hue proverbially associated with envy (*l* 9).

<sup>50</sup> The prayers are taken from the Litany of Saints, the names of Mary and Michael standing in the actual order of the Roman Litany. They, in their heatitude, are sharers in a joy which is not diminished, but increased, by the number of those who share it, and the prayer implies an aspiration after that element of blessedness.

<sup>55</sup> The penalty connects itself with the etymology of *invidia*. The sinners had looked with an evil eye on the good of others. They are punished by the privation of the power to see that good till they have learnt to rejoice in it. The picture of the blind beggars standing at the doors of churches on special indulgence days, common at all times, may have been a special remembrance of the year of jubilee when Dante was at Rome.

They seemed to me in coarsest sackcloth dight,  
 And with his shoulder each the other propped,  
 And all leant up against the embankment's height 60  
 E'en thus the blind, whose means of life are stopped,  
 Stand at our Pardons asking alms for bread,  
 And one man's head is on another's dropped,  
 That pity may in others' hearts be shed,  
 Not only at the sound of words they speak, 65  
 But at the sight which no less grief hath bred  
 And as the blind the sun's rays vainly seek,  
 So to the souls of whom I spake but now  
 The light of Heaven shows but a glimmering streak  
 For thread of iron pierceth every brow, 70  
 And sews their eyes up, as with falcon wild  
 Is done, since else its wings no rest allow.  
 Cruel I seemed to leave them thus beguiled,  
 To gaze on others, yet myself unseen,  
 Then turned I to my Counsel wise and mild 75  
 Well knew he what the dumb to say did mean,  
 And therefore waited not for my demand,  
 But said, "Speak thou, with words both brief and keen"  
 Virgil stood by me on that outer band  
 Of the high bank, whence chance of fall is met, 80  
 For by no rampart circled it doth stand,  
 On the other side devoted souls were set,  
 Who from that suture did such pain endure  
 That with the tears forced out their cheeks were wet.  
 To them I turned and said, "O people, sure 85  
 To gaze upon the glorious Light on high,—  
 The one sole end which doth your aim allure,—  
 So may God's grace bid every foul scum fly  
 That stains your conscience, and the mind's stream flow  
 Full clear and unimpid through it inwardly 90

71 The somewhat cruel custom of thus taming falcons is mentioned by the Emperor Frederick in his treatise *De Arte Venandi* (*scart, l'hid*)

74 One notes the delicate touch of courteous feeling, in itself the very opposite of envy 84 The tears that flow slowly indicate the difficulty of repentance where envy has been the besetting sin The prayer that follows is, in substance, that those tears may flow fast and freely, the impediment of the "scum" of guilt, which now impedes their vision, being removed What such souls need is the encouragement given by the assurance that the end, the vision of the "high light" of God, is certain, though the discipline is slow and painful The "river of the mind" that flows from the fountain of light will at last come in full force to purify and clear

Tell me, for that will dear and gracious show,  
 If here dwell soul of Latin lineage,  
 For him, perchance 'twere good that I should know "  
 "O brother mine, each soul its heritage  
 Finds in the one true City, thou wouldst say, 95  
 'Who in Italia made his pilgrimage.'"  
 I seemed to hear this answer some short way  
 In front of where I stood, and therefore wout  
 Where better chance of hearing me had they.  
 Among the rest I saw a soul intent, 100  
 And shouldst thou ask how this I could desery,  
 I say her chun, like blind man's, was up bent  
 "Spirit," I said, "who stoop'st to mount on high,  
 If thou art she who now did answer give,  
 Tell me thy name or where thy home did lie?" 105  
 "I in Siena," answered she, "did live,  
 And with the rest my foul life purify,  
 Weeping to Him that He Himself may give  
 Though Sapia I was called, yet nought had I  
 (Of sapience, and rejoiced in others' ill 110  
 Far more than in mine own prosperity.  
 And lest thou deem I speak deceiving still,  
 Hear if I was as foolish as I tell  
 When my life's arch was sloping down the hill,  
 My citizens were joined in battle fell 115  
 On Colle's plain, with many a foe in sight,  
 And I prayed God for what through Him befell  
 There were they routed, and in bitter flight  
 Were turned, and I, beholding that defeat,  
 Felt in my soul an unsurpassed delight, 120

93 "Latin" used here, as elsewhere, in its widest sense, as equivalent to Italian (l. 95) the answer to the question shows that the discipline was not in vain. The soul that speaks has risen from the narrow limitations of its earthly jealousies to the thought of the citizenship of the heavenly Jerusalem. We note the contrast with the "heavenly Athens" of the *Comte*.

100 We are left to the guesses of commentators as to the history of Sapia. Whether the name belonged to man or woman, whether, if the latter, as all but one report, she was the wife of Cino de' Pigo, or of the Provençal Salvan of C. XII 121, (?) or of Ghimibaldi Saracino of the family of the Bigozzi, we are unable to decide.

114 Falling back on what Dante himself tells us, with some additions from the commentators, we learn that Sapia was past the age of thirty-five (l. 111), that the Sienese and other Ghibellines under Salvan were defeated by the Florentines at Colle, a fortress near Volterra, in 1269, that Salvan was taken and beheaded, that Sapia prayed for the defeat of her own countrymen, assuming that that was the will of God, that she rejoiced when she saw them routed from the fortress of Colle, and then prayed thus, "Now, O God, do with me what Thou wilt: all the ill that I thou canst, now my wishes are satisfied, and I die content" (*Beniv, Scart, Vill* vii 31).



So that I upward looked with o'erbold heat  
 And cried to God, 'Now fear I Thee no more,'  
 As did the blackbird for one spring day sweet.  
 Peace with my God I sought ere life was o'er,  
 Just at the last, nor would my life e'en now 125  
 Be by my penance lessened in its score,  
 Had it not been that in each holy vow  
 Piero Pettignan' remembered me,  
 In whom for me a sorrowing love did grow.  
 But thou who passest by, who may'st thou be, 130  
 Asking our state, and go'st with open eyes,  
 E'en so I deem, and speak'st with breath yet free?"  
 "Mine eyes," I said, "I here shall lose likewise,  
 But for brief time, for little the offence  
 Which they have wrought by envious jealousies 135  
 Far greater terror keeps me in suspense  
 Of the dread torment working there below,  
 For even now I feel that weight immense"  
 And she "Who then up here doth guide thee so,  
 If of retreat thou any hope discern?" 140  
 And I "Lo! there my silent escort know.  
 And living am I, therefore ask in turn,  
 O chosen soul, if thou would'st have me stir  
 For thee my mortal feet in yonder bourne"  
 "Ah me! so new is this that meets mine ear," 145  
 She answered, "'tis sure sign God loves thee well,  
 Wherefore at times let prayer thy succour bear,

125 The words, more or less analogous to our proverb that "one swallow does not make a summer, imply a simile. A blackbird had found shelter in a house during winter. When a fine day came at the end of January (such days are known in Lombardy as *giorni della merla*), he began to sing out, saying to his protector, 'Now master I care not for thee, for the winter is past' (*Scart*). The proverb is found in Sacchetti, *Nov.* 149.

128 Piero Pettignano is probably of Siena (*cf.* 1289). In his calling of a combmaker, from which he took his name (*Pettino* = comb), he was noted for an unusual honesty, and would refund the price if he had sold a defective article. He entered the Franciscan Order as a Tertiary, gained the reputation of a saint who worked miracles, and was canonised by the Senate of Siena in 1328. A tomb, altar, and *chapel* were dedicated to him in the Church of S. Francis, and his picture is still to be seen there and in other churches. Sapia was said to have often given him alms while she lived, and he requited her charity by the greater charity of his prayers for her soul's peace (*Scart*, *Phil*).

131 It will be remembered that Sapia could not see the speaker who had addressed her.

134 The self-analysis is, if I mistake not, of special interest. The pilgrim knows that he is not exempt from envy, had perhaps felt at least a bitterness like that of Asaph when he saw "the ungodly in such prosperity" (*Psa.* lxxiii 3), but far more was he conscious that pride had been his besetting sin. So *Phil* (ix 136) describes him as proud and scornful, eager for glory and popular applause, disdaining the converse of all but scholars.

144 Shall he go to the relations of Sapia who were yet living and ask their prayers for her? She, in her reply, speaks as feeling that the pity which makes the offer will give a power to his prayers which might be lacking to those of others.

And by the keen desires that in thee dwell,  
 If e'er in Tusean land thy steps pass through,  
 I ask thee to my kin my praise to tell 150  
 Thou wilt find them among that worthless crew  
 Who hope in Talamone, and will waste  
 More hopes than were to Dian's waters due  
 To greater loss the admirals shall haste."

## CANTO XIV

*The Course of the Arno—Guido del Duca—Renier da Calboli*

"Who then is he that circles this hill's slope,  
 Ere he, by death enfranchised, here hath flown,  
 Who at his will doth close his eyes or open?"  
 "I know him not, but know that not alone 5  
 He comes, ask thou, he nearer thee doth wend,  
 And that he speak, greet him with gentle tone."  
 So did two souls, as each to each did bend,  
 Hold converse of me there upon my right,  
 Then upward turned their face, as greeting friend  
 And one said "O thou soul, who still art bright 10  
 In flesh, yet to high Heaven art moving on,  
 Of thy great love console us, tell outright

<sup>151</sup> The words are a prophecy after the event, taunting the Siennese with the failure of three schemes for the aggrandisement of their city: (1) They wished to become a commercial power, like Pisa and Genoa, and to construct a port near the fortress of Talamone, in the Maremma, not far from Orbetello, which they actually bought in 1303 for 8000 gold florins, but soil and climate were against them and the plan was abandoned. In 1306, however, Florence imported corn from Sicily which was unshipped at Talamone. (2) The Siennese, to the belief that there was a subterranean river, to which popular legends starting from the tradition that a statue of that goddess had stood in the market-place of Siena, as that of Mars did at the Ponte Vecchio of Florence, gave the name of Dian's, and which they hoped to utilize in connexion with the Talamone scheme. (3) The word "admirals" has been taken (a) in its ordinary meaning, (b) as applied to the contractors or commissioners for the construction of the harbour. For them Sapia prophesies that they would lose both time and money, probably their lives also. Possibly "the admiral of the Siennese fleet" had become a proverbial taunt at Florence. We ask, as we read the lines, whether Dante put the words into the mouth of Sapia as showing that her ruling passion was not yet extinct, or whether we are to find in them a conscious or unconscious utterance of the temper that rejoices in the misfortune of others, the *εὐχάριστος* of Greek ethics. The Siennese seem to have provoked him more than the people of any other city in Italy. Comp. *H* xxix 127-132.

<sup>2</sup> The two speakers are Guido del Duca (l. 81) and Renier dei Calboli (l. 88), both of Romagna. They, with their eyes closed, have heard the words of one who sees, and is alive (*C* xiii 142). One of them (l. 4) has learnt also that he has a companion with him. Then, with the upturned look of the blind, they begin to ask for further knowledge.

Whence thou art come, and who, for thou hast won  
 Such marvel from us by this grace of thine,  
 As wins a thing that no'er before was done." 15  
 And I. "There flows, where Tuscan slopes incline,  
 A stream that springs from Falterona's fount,  
 Nor do a hundred miles its course confine,  
 This frame I bring from banks that it surmount.  
 To tell thee who I am were speech in vain, 20  
 For yet my name sounds not of great account"  
 "If well thy meaning doth a footing gain  
 Within my mind," then answered me the one  
 Who first spake, "thou of Arno speakest plain"  
 Then said the other "Why this mystery thrown 25  
 By him upon the name that stream doth bear,  
 As on a thing too dreadful to be shown?"  
 And then the shade that did that question hear,  
 Thus answered "That I know not, but indeed  
 'Tis meet that valley's name oblivion share, 30  
 For from its source, where such full streams proceed,  
 In that Alp-range whence is Peloro riven,  
 That in few spots it doth that mark exceed,  
 Down to the point where to the sea is given  
 A due return for what the sky hath dried, 35  
 Whence rivers on their downward course are driven,

<sup>15</sup> The whole Canto appears to have been written in one of the darkest hours of Dante's life, when he was most tried by the grief of exile and the sense of baseness and treachery in those around him, perhaps by the utter failure of the hopes which had been centred in the success of Henry VII. Comp. his letter to the "*sacrestissimo Fiorentino*" written in 1311 (*Prat. O. M.* iii pp. 450-458). Lucany and Romagna are alike hateful to him, and he pours out his most scathing philippic upon both of them making an opportunity out of the question which might have been answered in a single word.

<sup>17</sup> Falterona is one of the highest of the Tuscan Apennines, near the borders of Romagna, and within the dominion of the Counts Guidi. The course of the Arno is on its southern slope. The omission of the name of the river is explained in ll. 25-30. From its source to its mouth it was as an accursed river. It would be well if its name and place could disappear from the map of Italy. We are reminded of the imprecations of *Job* xviii. 17.

<sup>21</sup> The word "*peloro*" of the original may be a rendering of Lucan (ii. 397) Speaking of a district in the Apennines he says—

"Nullogue a vertice tellus  
 Altius intumuit propinque accessit Olympo"

And in this case it would point simply to height. Another rendering refers the word to the character of that part of the Apennines as a watershed, the sources of the Arno and the Tiber, the Lamone, the Savio, and two other rivers lying within the compass of eighteen miles.

<sup>22</sup> The word Alpine (*alpastro*) seems used in its distinctive Greek and Italian meaning for a mountain below the level of perpetual snow. Pelorus, the north east point of the triangle of Sicily, is thought of as physically a continuation of the Apennine range, the last vertebra, as it were, of the great backbone of Italy. The tradition that it had been parted by some great convulsion from that chain is embodied in Dante's favourite poets, *Æneid* iii. 414-419, *Lucan*, ii. 437.

<sup>23</sup> Simple as the physical theory of the rivers being replenished by the evaporation from

Virtue her head, as though a foe, must hide,  
 Like viper shunned of all, or through ill chance  
 Of climate, or by evil custom tried,  
 And hence that wretched vale's inhabitants 40  
 Do in their nature such a change endure,  
 'Twould seem they fed, as Circe's visitants,  
 Among foul swine, of acorns worthier sure  
 Than of aught else that's made for human food.  
 At first it creeps with scanty stream and poor, 45  
 Then lower down it finds a currish brood,  
 That snarl far more than they have power to bite,  
 And turns its face from them in scornful mood  
 It flows and falls, and as it gains in night,  
 Finds the dogs changed to savage wolves and fell, 50  
 That ditch accursed and in evil plight  
 Descending then, its streams through deep dales swell,  
 And find the foxes whom all ill frauds fill,  
 'Gainst fear of traps their cunning serves them well,

the sea may seem to us, we note that it was one of the new theories in which Dante, as a student of science, prided himself (comp. *Par.* II on the spots on the moon's surface), and the dominant mediæval view, as set forth by his master Brunetto in the *Lessio* (II 36), was that the springs from which rivers flow were replenished by filtration from the sea through the crevices of the earth.

<sup>45</sup> The absence of virtue was the common characteristic of the whole valley of the Arno. The inhabitants had lost their true humanity, and were bestialised, like those whom Circe had transformed by her incantations (*Æn.* VII 19, *Hom. Od.* X 210). The various forms of evil are specified in the lines that follow. The passage may have been in part based upon Dante's favourite Boethius (IV 3), who compares human vices with the same passions as seen in brutes. The swine are the dwellers in the vale of Casentino, then under the Counts Guidi, on whom (lords or vassals, or both) Dante fixes the brand of gross licentiousness. His feelings towards them had probably been exasperated by the time-serving and treacherous policy which they adopted in 1311 and 1312 in regard to the great Ghibelline movement under Henry VII, on which he had built so much. The fact that they were known as the Counts of Poreiano, and that large herds of swine were kept by the peasants may have suggested the *nomen et omen* view. Traditions, more or less vague, report that he had been received as a guest by two of the Counts, but also that he had been imprisoned for a time in the fortress of Porciano (*Irriga*, 123). It is, at least, suggestive that Dante's memorable letter to the Emperor is dated from the sources of the Arno (*Frat. O. M.* III 474), and the letter to the people of Florence, of which this Canto is almost an echo, was written in the same region (*Frat. O. M.* III 458).

<sup>46</sup> The epithet "poor" may either refer to the meagreness of the stream, or be simply an epithet of scorn.

<sup>48</sup> There may have been local reasons for the successive denunciations. After flowing through the valley of the Casentino (*C.* V 94 *H.* xxx 65), it passes by the village of Quarata seven kilometres from Arezzo, which probably supplies the "curs" of l. 46, then turns abruptly to the west, passes into the Val d'Arno, flows northward below Villombrosa, receives its tributaries and finds itself among the "wolves" of Florence (*Par.* xxv, 6), that animal being the special symbol of greed (*H.* I 49).

<sup>50</sup> Beyond Florence the Arno passes through another gorge to Pisa, which furnishes the "foxes," conspicuous for the cunning of which we have had instances in *II* xv 67, xxvii 75. Pisa, like Arezzo, was Ghibelline in its politics, but neither city came up to the poet's ideal standard of faithfulness to principle.

Nor cease I, though another hear me still, 55  
     And well 'twill be for him to bear in mind  
     What Truth's high Spirit opens at its will.  
 I see thy grandson whom those wolves shall find  
     As hunter fierce upon that wild stream's ways,  
     With spell of fear their troubled souls to bind, 60  
 He sells the flesh, though life still in them stays,  
     And then he slays them, like a worn-out steer,  
     Many he robs of life, himself of praise.  
 Blood-stained he issues from that forest drear,  
     And leaves it such that for ten centuries, 65  
     Its primal growth it never more shall bear."  
 As at the news of coming miseries  
     The listener's face is clouded o'er with gloom,  
     Upon whatever side the danger rise,  
 So I that other soul who heard this doom 70  
     With head inclined, saw grieved in sore chagrin,  
     When on his soul the sentence dread did loom.  
 The speech of one, the other's look and men,  
     Made me wish much to know who they might be,  
     And this I asked, with prayers thrown in between 75  
 Whereat the spirit who first spake to me,  
     Began again. "Thou wishest I should bend,  
     What thou for me dost not, to do for thee,  
 But since God wills so visibly to send  
     Such grace to thee, thy prayer I will not spurn 80  
     Guido del Duca I, to this attend.

<sup>55</sup> Guido apologises, as it were, for speaking of the evil deeds of Rinieri's descendants, on the ground that for Dante 'forewarned' will be 'forearmed'. The "truthful spirit" is that of the Divine inspiration which reveals the future to him.

<sup>56</sup> The grandson or nephew, of Rinieri is Folciere da Calboli of Romagna, who was called in as Podestà of Florence in 1302, and used his authority in combination with the *Neri*, to inflict severe penalties, death, confiscation, exile, on the *bianchi* (*Inf.* viii 59, *Par.* V D p. 188). The "wolves" are the citizens of Florence, who had been so described in l. 50. The word "sells" implies that his ferocity had the additional baseness of being prompted by greed of gain.

<sup>57</sup> The "gloomy wood" seems to connect itself with *II* 15, but not sufficiently so as to lead us to limit and localise the earlier allegory, which remains in all the fulness of its meaning, as embracing the whole inner life of the poet. To Dante's spirit, bleeding with the sense of wrong, the evil wrought by such a tyrant as Folciere seemed absolutely irremediable.

<sup>57</sup> A v 2 gives "future" instead of "grievous," but MSS. preponderate for the latter.

<sup>75</sup> Dante, it will be remembered, had not given his name in answer to Guido's question.

<sup>81</sup> Of Guido del Duca we know only the fact that he was of Brettinoro (l. 112) near Forlì, and what he tells of himself here, as being in the circle of the envious, and reaping now the harvest of the seed which he had sown in his lifetime.

So did my boiling blood with envy burn  
 That if I saw a man with gladsome brow,  
 Thou would'st have seen me pale and livid turn  
 As I sowed then, such straw-crop reap I now : 85  
 O race of men, why place your whole heart there  
 Where a fixed law no partner will allow ?  
 Renier is this ; and he the fame doth bear  
 Of all the house of Calboli, where none  
 Of that high praise of his is worthy heir ; 90  
 Nor is his stock thus stripped the only one  
 'Twixt Po and mountain, Reno and the sea,  
 Reft of the good whence truth and joy are won  
 For all within these limits filled we see  
 With plants of poison, so that all too late 95  
 To check their growth good tillage now would be  
 Where is good Lizio, where Manardi great,  
 Guy of Carpi-gua and Pier Traversari ?  
 O Romagnuoli, race degenerate !

<sup>85</sup> Dante returns to his favourite thought that in the possession of earthly goods, the presence of a partner diminishes the satisfaction of possession, while, in the higher region of heavenly good, the joy of each is heightened by the participation of others. Comp. C. xv. 61-75, *Par.* xxii. 24.

<sup>86</sup> Of Renier de Calboli of Forlì we know as little as of Guido del Duca. He has been identified with a Guelph Podestà of Parma of that name in 1252. He is said (*Benv.*) to have died in 1295. For other references to Forlì, see C. xxiv. 32, *II.* xvi. 99, xxvii. 43.

<sup>87</sup> The words show some personal experience of the degeneracy of the Calboli of Forlì in the course of Dante's exile, but we are left to conjecture what it was.

<sup>88</sup> The "mountain" is the Apennine range—the Reno (*Inf.* xviii. 61), the river which flows by Bologna. The four boundaries are those of the province of Romagna in Dante's time.

<sup>89</sup> The words point to what should be the characteristics of a noble race—loyalty to the higher truth which is the guide of life, but also the culture and refinement which are the elements of delight. What has been said of this family is extended in *II.* 94 to the whole region of Romagna. Dante mourns, as Burke mourned, that the "age of chivalry" was fled. With all its faults, it had elements of "sweetness and light," and the world was worse and not better for their absence.

<sup>90</sup> The contrast between the good old times of Romagna and its later degeneracy presents a parallel to the like contrast between the past and present of Florence as painted by Cacciaguida in *Par.* xvi. and xvii. Both bring out what one may call the archæological element of Dante's mind, the love of old world stories, which were fused by his genius into materials for his poem. To us these names are like old coins on which we can scarcely trace the image and superscription. To him they were, as the Border-legends were to Scott, full of life, associated with memories of romantic scenes, and stories which he had heard from the lips of eye-witnesses. Lizio of Valbona, Lord of Ravenna, also a citizen of Forlì and a friend of Renier de Calboli, was conspicuous for a large-hearted courtesy and hospitality. His daughter is said to have been married to Richard Manardi. Local traditions at Valbona (regardless of the fact that he was dead in 1200) speak of his having been one of Dante's hosts during his exile, and point to the stone on which the poet used to sit. Possibly he may have been a guest of Lizio's in the earlier period of his life. Henry Manardi was a friend of Lizio's, and of like character, living at Bretinoro (1172) or Faenza. P. di Dante and Benv. state that he was also a friend of Guido del Duca, who was to him as an *alter ego*, but this seems hardly consistent with Dante's estimate of Guido's character.

<sup>91</sup> We pass in Pier Traversari to a memorable name among the contemporaries of Frederick II. As Lord of Ravenna, he, with the help of Bologna, held out, as long as he lived, against the Emperor's attacks in 1239. He died in 1240, much lamented by his subjects, and the city then fell into Frederick's power (Alberti, *Hist. di Bologna* x). Rossi, however (*Stor. di*

When shall a Fabbro for Bologna care? 100  
 When shall Faenz' a Bernard Fosco own,  
 Full noble growth from shoots that lowly are!  
 Wonder then not, O Tuscan, if I moan,  
 When I Guido da Prata call to mind,  
 And Ugolin of Azzo, whom we've known; 105  
 Frederic Tignoso, with his kith and kind,  
 The Traversari, Anastagi's line,  
 (Neither of which true heir hath left behind),  
 Ladies and knights, the labours wont to join  
 With sports, once love and courtesy's delight, 110  
 Where now men's hearts to baseness vile decline  
 O Brottinoro, why not flee from sight,  
 Since gone to wreck is all thy family,  
 And many more, to 'scape being vile outright?

*Ravenna*), makes Paolo Traversari, the son of Pier, the hero of these events, and assigns the death of Pier to 1225. Of Guido da Carpigna, between Marechisa and Foglia in Montefeltro, who was a contemporary of the elder Traversari, tradition reports incidents of a profuse and generous hospitality.

<sup>100</sup> By many commentators "*Fabbro*" is taken as a common noun, and he is described as an artisan, Lambertuccio by name, who, by his integrity and unselfishness, had risen to great influence among the citizens of Bologna. Taking it as a proper name, we may connect it with the fact that a Fabio of Bologna was Podestà of Pisa in 1254, and that a Fabio (*Fabbro*?) Lambertucci of that city filled the honourable post of keeper of the Carroccio in 1228 (*Scart*).

<sup>101</sup> Bernardin di Fosco was said, like Fabbro, to have risen from the ranks, till he was recognised as lord of Faenza, and was perhaps also Podestà of Pisa in 1249. The stress which Dante lays on the goodness of men of low estate falls in with the whole tone of *Conv.* xvi. and of *Conv.* iv., based on it, as to the nature of true nobility. His Chibellinum assumed an ideal emperor, an ideal aristocracy, and he had broken loose from the baser feudalism which postulated a hereditary noblesse. For him it was true, *Virtus sola nobilitas*. The *Canzone* gives the first utterance in point of time, then comes the prose expansion in the *Conv.*, then the historical induction which we have here.

<sup>104</sup> The notices of Guido da Prata, so named, probably, from a castle between Ferrara and Ravenna, are sufficiently hazy, the only facts stated, in addition to general excellence of character, being that he was a friend of Ugolino of Azzo, and, like him, had risen from the ranks of the people. Of Ugolino it has been conjectured that he belonged to the house of the Ubalduini of Florence (probably to a branch settled at Faenza), and that he was a brother of Ubalduino della Pella (*C.* xxiv. 29) and of the Cardinal Ottaviano (*H.* x. 120).

<sup>106</sup> Tignoso is said to have been of Rimini by descent, but to have been also connected with Brettinoro. For the Ravenna family of Ravenna see note on l. 98. The Anastagi, also of Ravenna, were expelled by the house of Polenta, leaving behind them the reputation of lambs who had been driven out by wolves. The repeated praises of other families seem to indicate at least a transient feeling of disappointment on Dante's part with the house of Polenta. The absence of an heir implies either that the families were extinct, or that their present representatives were unworthy of their lineage. As a matter of history, the house of the Traversari passed away in 1292 in the person of William, who died without male issue, and whose daughter became the wife of Stephen, king of Hungary.

<sup>109</sup> The words paint the golden age of chivalry, with its tournaments and courts of love, and *grux chevaliers* and fair ladies. That form of life had passed away, partly through the stern view of life presented by the preachers of the Mendicant Orders, partly through the commercial spirit, which brought with it the evil greed of gain, and Dante looked back on it with feelings of regretful admiration. Comp. the description by Rolando of Padua in *Purg.* i. 302.

<sup>112</sup> Brettinoro, a small city in Romagna near Forlì, had been conspicuous in the period of which Dante speaks as sharing in the lustre of a courteous hospitality. As the story ran, a column stood in the piazza with rings fixed on it, each belonging to one of the chief houses of the city. A stranger entering the town fastened his horse's bridle to one of these rings, and at once became the guest of the family whose ring he had, by choice or accident, selected (*Scart*). In the 12th century it had belonged to the Countess Aldrada, conspicuous for her

Good is Bagnacaval's sterility,  
 And ill does Castrocar', and Como wise,  
 Who rear of Counts such evil progeny.  
 Well will Pagani do, their demon curse  
 Being taken from them, yet their evil fame  
 Shall still cleave close when men their deeds rehearse 10  
 O Ugolin de' Fantoli, thy name  
 In safety stands, for none are waiting seen  
 Who can, degenerate, mar its praise with shame.  
 But go thy way, O Tuscan, now, I ween,  
 'Tis sweeter far for me to weep than speak, 20  
 So by our converse grieved my mind hath been "  
 We knew each footstep those dear souls and meek  
 Hound, as we went, and therefore silently  
 They made us bold our onward way to seek  
 When we advancing left that company, 30  
 As thunder when it cleaves the air, did thrill  
 A voice, and as it spake to us, drew nigh,

skill in the 'gay science' and for the courts of love which were held under her superintendence. She had succeeded in inducing Frederick Barbarossa to raise the siege of Anagni. Her patrimony passed at a later date into the hands of the Malaspina of Rimini, who also obtained possession of Brettinoro, and this fact associated her name with the memories of the poet a later year (*V. l. viii. 94*).

The passionate reproach reminds us of that of Pistoia in *II. xxv. 10*. The family of the Manardi and that of Guido del Duca had both as Ghibellines, been expelled in 1295 and with them *as l. 114* implies, many others who chose exile rather than apostasy.

115 The County of Bagnacavallo a castle, now a town, about five miles from Ferrara, were the Malaspina and it seems to have been a case of *nomen et omen*. In 1249 they drove the Ghibellines under Guido da Polenta out of Rimini. In the last decade of the 13th century they were in ill repute a often changing sides. When Dante wrote they would appear to have been on the point of dying out.

116 The fortress of Castrocaro had belonged in the 13th century to a family of Ghibelline counts, who submitted to the Church in 1282. They were succeeded by the Ordelaffi of Forlì, who sold the fortress to the Florentines. Como, near Castrocaro, had also been under Ghibelline rule. Dante obviously looked on its owners as unworthy representatives of the cause. It would be well if they would die out like those of Bagnacavallo.

118 The intensest scorn falls on the family of the Pagani, Lords of Imola and Faenza, as represented by Manardi, the "demon" of this verse. He had been brought up by the Commune of Florence and therefore though by descent, and in Romagna, belonging to the Ghibelline party was constantly changing sides and, as at once cruel, implacable, and plausible, acquired the epithet with which Dante has branded him. Manardi died in 1302, so that we have once more a prophecy after the event. It would seem that the poet did not see much chance for the better in the action of the family.

121 Ugolin de' Fantolin of Faenza had been in high repute for chivalrous faultlessness. For Dante he had the special attraction of having been a loyal adherent of Manfred. He died without issue in 1282. He at least was spared the shame of degenerate descendants.

124 The long tirade ends in the silence of sorrow. The soul of Guido would fain be left to weep over the troubles of Romagna with his friend, and therefore bids Dante depart. *As l. 7* gives "thy" for "our."

128 The souls were blinded (*C. xiii. 70*), and therefore could only hear the footsteps of the travellers, who infer from their silence that they had taken the right road as they went on their onward way.



Crying, "Whoever findeth me shall kill,"  
 And fled, as thunder peals die off around,  
 When the dark cloud no more the sky doth fill. 135  
 And when our ears had respite from that sound,  
 Behold another with such loud acclaim,  
 It seemed like thunder in its quick rebound,  
 "I am Aglauros, who a stone became"  
 And then, that I might keep the Poet near, 140  
 Backward my footsteps, and not forward, came  
 Already was there stillness through the air,  
 And he said to me, "That was the hard rein  
 That ought a man within due bounds to bear  
 But ye the bait still swallow, and are ta'en 145  
 By the curved hook of that old Enemy,  
 And curb and call avail not to restrain.  
 The Heavens call on you wheeling round on high,  
 And show to you their beauteous orbs eterne,  
 Yet your gaze only on the earth doth lie, 150  
 And so He chastens who doth all discern."

### CANTO XV.

*The Angel of the Third Circle—The Cure of Envy—The Discipline of the  
 Passionate—Examples of Charity*

EVER as much as 'tween the third hour's close  
 And day's beginning see we of that sphere  
 Which, like a child, sports on nor seeks repose,

<sup>133</sup> The words were those of Cain (*Gen.* iv. 14), as the great typical instance of malignant envy, but as Cain was in the circle of Hell to which he gave his name, the voice must be thought of as an angelic or otherwise supernatural utterance, as in ll. 26-36.

<sup>139</sup> The story of Aglauros as told by Ovid (*Met.* ii. 708-812) was that she was jealous of her sister Erse, who was beloved by Mercury, and was therefore transformed into a stone. The lines that follow paint the poet's terror at the warning conveyed by the two utterances.

<sup>143</sup> As in C. xiii. 40, *Conv.* iv. 26, the examples of evil are the curb which restrain men from the indulgence of passions of which that evil was the outcome.

<sup>145</sup> Men, in spite of that warning, swallow the bait with which the great Adversary tempts them (C. xi. 20) and find that they are taken captive by him (*Eccl.* ix. 12, 2 *Tim.* ii. 26). The "call," strictly that of the falconer to his bird, answers in like manner to the allurements by which men are invited to choose the more excellent way. The reader will remember the similitudes of *H.* xiii. 112, xvii. 127, xxii. 130.

<sup>149</sup> The "eternal beauties" in which Dante finds a voice are the stars of the firmament. The words connect themselves with the closing lines of each part of the *Com.* and with the poet's words when he refused to return to Florence under conditions which he thought degrading: "Have I not the sun and the stars wherever I may be?"

<sup>150</sup> After the manner of C. ix. 1-9, we have a characteristic and complicated description of the fact that it was three hours before sunset on the Mount of Purgatory and midnight in

So much there seemed now, towards evening clear,  
 For the bright sun to reach its journey's end ; 5  
 There it was evening, midnight was it here.  
 And straight upon our face its rays did bend,  
 Because we so did round the mountain wind  
 That we our way towards the West did wend ,  
 When I my forehead shrinking back did find 10  
 From the bright sheen than at the first far more,  
 And things not understood confused my mind ,  
 Whereat my hands I raised mine eyebrows o'er,  
 And made myself a covert from the light,  
 Which thus less bright excess of radiance wore 15  
 As when from water or from mirror bright  
 The ray leaps upward to the opposed side,  
 Ascending at an angle opposite  
 And equal, as it fell, and goes as wide  
 From the plumb-line in that its angle's play, 20  
 As science and experiment decide,  
 So I seemed smitten by reflected ray,  
 Which falling there before me, rose again,  
 Wherefore my glance was quick to shrink away.  
 "What then is this, sweet Father, whence in vain 25  
 I seek to screen mine eyes as I desire,  
 That seemeth now to move to us amain?"

Tuscan. The sphere is that of the sun and stars which contain the ecliptic, and which, in its perpetual change of position in its apparent relation to the earth, is compared to the restless movement of a boy. The comparison does not seem a very happy one, and may, perhaps, be one of the few exceptions to Dante's assertion that the necessities of his triple rhymes had never led him to say anything which he would not have said without them. Possibly, also, the thought may have been suggested by the "*mutatur in horas*" in which Horace (*Ep. ad Pis.* 160) describes the temper of boyhood. That, at least, was literally true of the apparent motion of the heavens.

<sup>11</sup> A new glory mingled with the light of the setting sun which fell upon the faces of the pilgrims, and as yet Dante did not see the angel (l. 12) from whom the radiance flowed.

<sup>12</sup> The law of optics that the angle of reflection is equal to that of incidence had come before Dante as a student of physical science. Further references, showing a love of these experiments, are seen in *Par.* II. 97-105. The phrase "falling of a stone in line direct," for the perpendicular, is said to have been first used by Albert the Great of Cologne, whose physical writings Dante had probably studied (*Par.* x. 98). The Italian *risfratta* seems to have been used for both the phenomena now distinguished as refraction and reflection. In this case it has the latter meaning. Dante had screened his eyes from the direct radiation of the angel's brightness. Now the rays met his gaze as reflected from the ground. As interpreted by what follows, we have, underlying the symbolism, the spiritual law that the inward eye can bear to gaze on the glory of heavenly things in proportion as it is purified from sin, just as in l. 36 there is the further truth that the victory over one form of evil renders the work of purification from others easier than before. The angels are represented at every stage of the Mount as rejoicing in the growing purity of the repentant soul, and meeting them with words of welcome and encouragement. So is there "joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth" (Comp. C. XII. 88, XVII. 67, XIX. 46, XX. 2, XXIV. 136, XXV. 55).

"Marvel thou not, if those of Heaven's high choir,"  
 Then answered he, "still dazzle and confound,  
 It is an angel, bidding men aspire : 30  
 Soon to behold these things that here abound  
 Will not be grievous, but a joy as sweet  
 As Nature for thy power to feel hath found "  
 When we the Angel ever-blest did meet,  
 With joyful voice he said, "Come, enter in" 35  
 On stair less steep than others for our feet  
 We mounted thence, and, as we went therein,  
 "Yea, Blessed are the Merciful" behind  
 We heard them sing, "Rejoice ye, ye that win "  
 I and my Master on our way did wind, 40  
 We two alone, I thinking, as I went,  
 Some profit good from words of his to find  
 And thus I spake to him and asked, "What meant  
 That spirit from Romagna when he spake  
 Of 'partners' and of that 'stern law's' intent?" 45  
 Then he to me "True measure doth he take  
 Of his great failing therefore marvel not  
 If he clude it, men's pain the less to make  
 Because your wishes choose as happiest lot  
 Where partnership doth make each portion less, 50  
 To sighs hath envy, as the bellows, wrought,  
 But if the love of you high sphere should bless  
 Your souls, and raise your longings low on high,  
 That fear would then no more your heart distress  
 For there the more each one 'our good' can cry, 55  
 So much the more can each claim as his own,  
 And in that convent burns more charity "

<sup>39</sup> The heatitude of the Merciful points to the grace which, as it is the antithesis, is also the true remedy, of envy. The definition of Cicero in this matter, "*Quemadmodum misericordia agnitudo est ex alterius rebus ad se vis, sic invidentia est agnitudo ex alterius rebus secundum*" (*Lusc* 10), agree with those of Aquinas, "*Invidius tristatur de bono proximi misericors autem tristatur de malo proximi*" (*Summ. P* II 2, 36 3). The other angelic utterance seems a kind of composite quotation, probably from some well known anthem, like the constantly recurring "*Sancti et iusti, in Domino gaudent*," or "*Lætamini in Domino, et exultate, iusti*," of the Roman *Commune Sanctorum*, embodying the substance of *Rom* XII 21, *Matt* V 12, *Rev* II 7.

<sup>40</sup> The poet's mind had been brooding over the words of Guido del Duca (*C* XIV 86, 87). He is taught to see that envy has its starting point in the wrong direction of our desires. When we seek earthly things, our share is diminished when others enter into partnership with us, not so when we seek heavenly things. There, in the words of Gregory the Great, the inheritance "*omnibus et una est, et singulis tota*" (*Mor* IV 31).

<sup>41</sup> The use of the term "cloister" to the company of saints is eminently characteristic (*C*

"Far keener hunger," said I, "now I've known,  
 Than if before my tongue had nothing said,  
 And more of doubt within my mind hath grown 60  
 How can it be that good distributed  
 Can with more wealth its many owners fill  
 In its possession than if few it fed?"  
 And he to me "Because thou fixest still  
 Thy spirit only upon things terrene, 65  
 From the true light thou darkness dost distil  
 That Good which passeth speech and bound, unseen,  
 Which dwells on high, doth unto Love speed so,  
 As to a body clear the ray sorene.  
 What heat it finds, so much it doth bestow, 70  
 So that how wide see'er our charity,  
 The Everlasting Might doth further flow.  
 And as the souls each other know on high,  
 The more there are to love, and they love more,  
 Each mirroring to each the radiancy. 75  
 And if my thoughts to meet thy need seem poor,  
 Thou shalt see Beatrice, she shall still  
 This and all other craving with her love  
 But onward speed and seek with earnest will  
 That like the two, the five wounds may be healed, 80  
 Which close, when they their pain's due measure fill."  
 I fain had said, "We'll hast thou this revealed,"  
 But saw that I had reached another round,  
 So that by restless eyes my lips were sealed.

xxvi 128, *Par* xi 99, xxv 127) In spite of all corruptions and shortcomings the life of the monastery, in its ideal, was a foreshadowing of the life of Heaven

<sup>61</sup> The question reminds us of those of Nicodemus (*John* iii 3, 9) Dante states apparently the difficulty which he had felt himself in order that it might be solved by others, and the solution is put into the mouth of Virgil, in order that it may be seen that human wisdom agrees on this point with the higher spiritual discernment, which is identified with Beatrice (l 77)

<sup>67</sup> God, as the Supreme Good, is light (*1 John* i 5), and every soul that is capable of receiving that light is as a mirror (we note the evolution of the thought from the scientific law of il 16-21), which does not absorb, but reflects it, and so the greater the number of souls, the more is the light mirrored, and therefore multiplied, by and for each and all. Comp the passage '*Chè solo Iddio*' in the *Canz* xvi prefixed to *Conv* iv and *Conv* iii 12, 15

<sup>80</sup> The two vices are pride and envy, the five that remain are wrath, sullenness (*accidia*), avarice, gluttony, and lust

And there I seemed as in a dream profound, 85  
     Ecstatic, to be plunged all suddenly,  
     And in a temple many people found.  
 And at the gate a lady fair, with eye  
     And sweet men of a mother, said, "My son,  
     Why hast thou dealt with us thus cruelly? 90  
 Behold thy sire and I with many a moan  
     Have sought thee sorrowing," and when she did cease,  
     The vision which I gazed upon was gone.  
 Then there appeared another ill at ease,  
     And o'er her cheeks the tears of grief flowed down, 95  
     As when men's scorn deprives us of our peace,  
 And said, "If thou art Master of the town  
     Whose name among the gods caused strife so great,  
     From whence the light of knowledge far is thrown,  
 On him take vengeance whose bold arm of late 100  
     Embraced our daughter, O Pisistratus,"  
     And then that Lord, with calm look and sedate,  
 Seemed with a look controlled to answer thus  
     "What shall we do to those who seek our ill,  
     If he we're loved by is condemned by us?" 105  
 A multitude, whom flaming rage did fill,  
     I then saw stone a youth, with clamour loud,  
     One to another shouting, "Kill him! kill!"  
 And I beheld him on his knees low-bowed,  
     To earth bent down as heavy death drew near: 110  
     But evermore his eyes as heaven's gates showed,

<sup>85</sup> The pilgrims find themselves in the circle of the Wrathful, where men are purified, as before, by examples, warnings, and beatitudes

<sup>87</sup> The scene is, of course, that of *Luke* ii 41-52. In the meekness and tenderness of the Virgin's words Dante sees the supreme instance of the triumph of meekness over the impulse which, under such circumstances, would have seemed natural

<sup>94</sup> The next example is drawn, after Dante's manner, from a strangely different source. The story is found in Val Max, *Facta et Dicta*, vi 2. A young Athenian had kissed the daughter of Pisistratus in the street. Her mother went to her father and demanded the punishment of the offender, and was answered as in ll 104-105

<sup>96</sup> The words refer to the strife between Neptune and Minerva, when the foundations of Athens were laid, as to which should be its tutelary deity (*Vet* vi 70)

<sup>107</sup> Nothing is said in *Acts* vi vii 15 to the age of S. Stephen, but Dante followed the traditions of art, in themselves sufficiently probable. The first deacons were likely, at the time of their appointment, to be contrasted with the elders of the Church in age as well as office (*Luke* xxii. 26, 1 *Pet* v 5).

<sup>111</sup> The words of *Acts* vii 55 simply state that Stephen "saw the glory of God." Dante adds the thought that that glory and the image of Christ passed through the eyes into the heart

And in that strife to Heaven's high Lord his prayer  
 He poured that He his fierce foes would forgive,  
 With such a look as unlocks pity's tear  
 But when my mind things outward did perceive, 115  
 Which, being without, the mind accepts as true,  
 I knew no false dreams did my soul conceive.  
 My Leader then, who saw me, full in view,  
 Act like a man who wakens from his sleep,  
 Cried out, "What ails thee, taking steps untrue? 120  
 Nay, thou for half a league thy course dost keep,  
 Veiling thine eyes, and with thy legs entwined,  
 Like one in wine or slumber fallen deep?"  
 "O my sweet Father, if my words thou'lt mind,  
 I'll tell thee," said I, "what I deemed I saw, 125  
 When my legs ceased their wonted use to find"  
 And he "If thou a hundred masks should'st draw,  
 Over thy face, from me thou could'st not veil  
 Within thy thoughts, however small, one flaw  
 What thou hast seen was that thou may'st not fail 130  
 To streams of peace thine heart to open quite,  
 Which from the Eternal Fount for all avail.  
 I did not ask, 'What ails thee?' as he might,  
 Who looks with those eyes only which see nought,  
 When reft of soul the body lies in night. 135  
 Strength to thy feet was what my question sought.  
 Thus must we spur the sluggards who are slack,  
 When sight returns, to use it as they ought."

114 Is the "compassion" that of God or man? The words point, if I mistake not, to the latter. It could hardly be said that not the prayer, but the face, of Stephen had moved God to pardon his chief persecutor. It might well be that the memory of that face, "as it were the face of an angel" (*Acts vi 15*), worked towards that persecutor's conversion.

118-117 What had been seen was, as in a vision, true subjectively, yet having no objective reality. Such visions formed, we must believe, a frequently recurring element in Dante's life, and the picture of one walking as in a trance, staggering as oppressed by sleep or wine, is a touch of self-portraiture. What Virgil saw on the Mount might have been seen often on the streets of Verona or Ravenna. Bocc (*V D*) reports an instance in which he stood entranced for hours without noticing even the stir and pageantry of a great procession.

131 The "waters of peace" are those which quench the fire of wrath, and they flow from the eternal fount of the love which is also peace. The phrase may have been intended to represent the *agua refectiois* of the *Vulg* of *Ps xliii. 2*.

135 Another touch of conscious self-portraiture. A man may, like Balaam, fall into a trance and see visions, and yet be none the better for them. Conscience, the higher self, speaking through Virgil, warns the poet that the "vision and the faculty divine" are given that they may lead to action. Apparently Dante had felt the fatal tendencies of the dreaminess of the poet's temperament.

Onward we went through twilight, with no lack  
 Of forward glances keen, to penetrate 140  
 Far through the radiant glow of sunset's track,  
 And lo! by slow degrees a smoke-cloud great  
 Drew on towards us, as the night obscure,  
 Nor was there place where we might find retreat  
 This reft us of our sight and fresh air pure. 145

### CANTO XVI.

*The Discipline for Anger—Marco the Lombard—Free Will and Man's Corruption—The Church and the Empire—The good Gherardo*

GLOOM as of hell and of a night bereft  
 Of every planet under scanty sky,  
 With nought unclouded by the dim gloom left,  
 Ne'er laid so thick a veil upon mine eye,  
 As did that smoke which covered us all o'er, 5  
 Nor satecloth e'er so rough the sense to try,  
 For I could look with open eyes no more,  
 Wherefore my Escort, wise and good and tried,  
 Came near, and my hand to his shoulder bore.  
 So, as a blind man walks behind his guide, 10  
 Lest he should lose his way, and stumble on  
 Aught through which hurt or death, perchance, betide,

141 We are startled at finding here, as in C. XVI. 1-6, a description which seems to belong rather to the poet's "Hell." In no other way, however, could Dante symbolise the fact that the passion of wrath darkens, even in the earlier stages of repentance, the soul's discernment, as of the things of Heaven, so also of the right relations of the things of earth.

1 The opening words are deliberately chosen. To be conscious of wrath is to be in Hell, with all its blackness of darkness, its bitterness and foulness (l. 13). In the remedial methods which Dante depicts we may find that which he had found effective in his own experience. To keep close to the highest human wisdom in its calmness was something, but the true remedy was found in the *Agnus Dei* which the worshiper heard at every Mass and Litany. It may be noted that in all masses for the departed "*Dona eis requiem*" took the place of "*Dona nobis pacem*." Here, however, as the souls pray for themselves, the latter form has to be read between the lines. Dante, we may well believe, had entered into the full meaning of those words as proclaiming the removal, not only of the penalty of sin, but of the sin itself. Of all sins, that of anger was perhaps the most difficult for an Italian temper, with its tendencies to the proverbial *vendetta*, to overcome, and Dante's letter to Henry VII against the Florentines and the immediately preceding Canto show how strong a hold it had on him, even about the time when he was writing this Canto.

I through that keen foul air my pathway won,  
     Heark'ning to my Guide's voice, which spake to me  
     But this "Take heed I leave thee not alone" 15  
 Voices I heard, and each most piteously,  
     Appeared for mercy and for peace to pray  
     The Lamb of God, who all our sins puts by  
 Still *Agnus Dei* led them on their way,  
     One word for all, for all one melody, 20  
     So that their song full concord did display.  
 "Do I hear spirits, Master?" then said I  
     And he to me "Thou rightly hast deserved,  
     And thus they march till wrath's bonds loosened be."  
 "Who then art thou who didst our smoke divide, 25  
     And speak'st of us as though thou still wert there,  
     Where men by calends measure time and tide?"  
 Thus speaking to us we a voice did hear.  
     Whereon my Master said "Make answer thou,  
     And ask if hence a path doth upward bear" 30  
 And I "O Being, who dost cleanse thee now,  
     That fair to Him who made thee thou return,  
     Great marvel, if thou follow me, thou'lt know"  
 "Far as I may with thee I'll gladly turn,"  
     He answered, "and if smoke our sight arrest, 35  
     By hearing we in company shall learn"  
 Then I began "In fleshly weeds still drest,  
     Which death dissolves, I take mine upward way,  
     And hither have I come through Hell's unrest,  
 And if God in His grace the truth display, 40  
     So that He wills that I His court shall see,  
     In manner strange to this our later day,  
 Hide not thy story ere death came on thee,  
     But tell me that, and if the pass be nigh  
     So let thy words be as true guide to me" 45

<sup>20</sup> The spirit's note, by the sign of the motion of the living body through the smoke and the tones of the living voice, that Dante is still in the flesh, in the life which is measured by the calends, nones, and ides, the months and days and years, which belong to time, but have no existence in eternity.

<sup>30</sup> As elsewhere, Dante declares the nature of his journey. He has been led through the anguish of Hell (the "if" is declaratory, not conditional) in ways which "modern usage knew not, though there were records of a like pilgrimage in the case of *Aneas* and *St. Paul* (*H. II. 13*), and in the visions of ancient monks and hermits, like *Fra Alberigo* and *St. Brendan*. The words imply that that kind of literature had gone out of fashion under the influence of the earlier Renaissance.



"A Lombard born, and Marco named was I;  
 I knew the world, and did that true worth love  
 Which slackened bows to hit no longer try.  
 Straight on before thee lies the path above."  
 So spake he, and then added: "Thee I pray, 50  
 Pray thou for me when thou on high shalt move."  
 And I to him: "In all good faith I say,  
 I'll do what thou dost ask, but I am tried  
 Within by doubt, until 'tis cleared away;  
 First it was simple, now 'tis multiplied, 55  
 By that thy speech which makes me well aware,  
 Here and elsewhere, of what had doubt supplied.  
 The world in sooth is desolate and bare  
 Of every virtue, as thou tellest me,  
 With evil big, and o'erlaid everywhere. 60  
 I pray thee point out what the cause may be,  
 That I may learn it and to others show,  
 For some that cause in heaven, on earth some see."  
 First a deep sigh, "Ah me!" in bitter woe  
 He breathed, and then began he: "Brother mine, 65  
 The world is blind; and thence thou comest so.  
 Ye who live now the cause of all assign  
 To Heaven above, as though necessity  
 Moved all with it along predestined line;  
 If thus were so, then in your deeds would lie 70  
 Free will destroyed, and 'twere unjust to give  
 Joy for good deeds, for evil, misery.

<sup>48</sup> Marco, who belonged to Venice, is described as a Lombard, either because that term is taken as including all Northern Italy, or because he lived chiefly among the Lombard nobles. The name of his family is passed over in silence. Commentators report him to have been upright, noble, generous, but, as his presence in this circle of the Mount implies, easily moved to anger. He had, it was said, refused, when a prisoner, to purchase his freedom by soliciting his friends to pay his ransom. He may have been identical with the Marco whom Villani names as having warned Ugolino of Pisa (vii 131). The wild conjecture which identifies him with Marco Polo, the Venetian (*Amp* 133), is met by the fact that that great traveller survived Dante and died in 1323.

<sup>49</sup> Guido del Duca (C xiv 29) had spoken of the general corruption that prevailed throughout Italy. Marco (l. 48) had implied that few were striving after righteousness. What was the cause of the evil? The astrologers referred it to the adverse influences of the stars, others to the depravity of man's will. Which was right? or was there a truth on either side, and if so, in what relation did the two causes stand to each other?

<sup>50</sup> The answer to the question is embodied in words which present a close parallelism to *Hom. Od.* i. 33. There is no reason to suppose that Dante had read those words in the original, but he may have come across them in Aulus Gellius (*Noct. Att.* vi 2). The main thought is, however, so natural, that it is scarcely necessary to refer the words to any earlier utterance. One who held, as a disciple of the Church's theology must hold, the freedom of man's will, could not admit a doctrine of Necessity which was fatal to it, and therefore to all conceptions of the Divine righteousness (Aquinas *Summ. P.* i. 73. 1, 95. 4).

Ye from the heavens your impulse first receive,—  
 I say not all—but, granting that I say,  
 Light too is given, or well or ill to live, 75  
 And free volition, which, although it stay,  
 Faint in first fight with those star-destinies,  
 Conquers at last, if trained in Wisdom's way.  
 Ye to a better Nature, Might more wise,  
 Though free, are subject: and that makes in you 80  
 The mind which is not subject to the skies.  
 Hence if the present world take path undue  
 In you the cause, on you the blame must rest.  
 And now to thee will I be escort true.  
 Forth from His hands whose acts His love attest, 85  
 Ere yet it be, as child the soul is brought,  
 Weeping and smiling, prattling and caressed,  
 The soul so simple that it knoweth nought  
 But this, that from a joyous Maker sprung,  
 It turns to that which with delight is fraught. 90  
 At first a small good tempts with savour strong,  
 By it 'tis tricked and after it doth press,  
 If guile or bit keep not its love from wrong.

<sup>75</sup> Dante, as might have been expected from his other references to stellar influences (*HF* xv 45, *Par* xiii 64, xxii 112), takes an intermediate position, here also following Aquinas (*Summa* I ii 95, 5) The planets do not act directly on the will, but they may impress certain tendencies on the human body, with its senses and affections, which in their turn affect, though they do not constrain, the will. Against those tendencies the will has a hard fight at first, but it gains strength in the conflict, and it is its own fault if it is not finally the conqueror. For that victory, however, it requires the nourishment of wisdom and of grace.

<sup>76</sup> Another element is brought into the question. If men are subject to the stellar influences, they are, in their freedom, subject also to the "greater might" of God, to the "better nature," which, mediately or immediately, through baptism or otherwise, they may claim as His gift to them. So Dante solves the problem which has vexed the souls of men through all ages, and leaves men with the gift of freedom, and therefore the burden of responsibility. Throughout he follows Aquinas as Aquinas had followed Augustine (*Civ. D.* v. 2).

<sup>77</sup> Simple as the words seem, they embody the poet's solution of another of the mysteries of existence, another of the vexed questions of patristic and scholastic theology. He rejects, (1) the theory of traducianism, the generation of the soul by the same act as that which generates the body, (2) the theory that angelic powers created it. He refers its creation to an immediate act of God (Aquinas, *Summa* I. 74).

<sup>78</sup> It would seem as if the image of sportive childhood which had suggested the comparison of *C.* xv 1-3 was still present to the poet's mind. In this instance the similitude is happier. The new-created soul is as an infant child, smiling that first smile which is the joy of the mother's heart, weeping also its first tears. As deriving its origin from the Giver of all joy, it turns to what has the semblance or reality of joy, is cheated by the semblance, and therefore needs the guidance which is supplied by laws and rulers, chiefly by the ideal King, the Emperor of the ideal polity (*Mov.* i. 12, 13). In the "nothing knows" of l. 88 we have the rejection of the Platonic doctrine of innate ideas balanced by the vague desires for the joy from which it has come forth, which remind us of Wordsworth's ode on *Early Intimations of Immortality*. The comparison of l. 86 finds an interesting parallelism in the phrase of the Platonist Olympiodorus (Becker, *Ancient Greek* p. 1291, in *Scyth.*), that the soul descends into the body at birth, *ἐκπίπτει* = "after the manner of a maiden."

Hence laws must as a curb the will repress.

A king we need, one who, at least, shall see  
That city's towers, where dwells true Righteousness. 85

Those laws are there, but who doth them obey?

Not one; because the shepherd who presides  
But chews the cud, no cloven hoof hath he.

And hence the people that beholds its guides 100

Seek only the same good itself doth seek,  
Feeds on that only, asking nought besides.

Well may'st thou see that guidance base doth speak

The true cause that hath made the world go wrong,  
Not the corruption of thy nature weak. 105

Rome once, when she to bless the world was strong,

Was wont to have two suns that brought to sight

The paths that to the world and God belong

This has quenched that, and now the sword doth smite,

Joined with the crosier, and 'tis ill that they 110

Should go together by sheer force of might;

Since joined, this casts the fear of that away.

If thou believe not, look upon the seed;

For by their fruits all plants their kind display.

<sup>90</sup> The true city is, of course, the ideal polity of a Christian state (C. xiii. 95). The tower which the ruler should keep in view, even when he fails to discern the full proportions of the city of the Great King, is Justice as seen in the enforcement of righteous laws.

<sup>91</sup> The ever recurring question *Quid prosunt leges sine moribus?* comes to the poet's mind, and leads to the further question, Whence comes that general neglect? The answer is at once in the highest degree both mediæval and Dantesque. The "Pastor" is the supreme Pontiff, but he belongs to the category of beasts which, according to the Mosaic law, were unclean, because they "chewed the cud" but did not "divide the hoof" (*Lev. xi. 3, Deut. xiv. 7*). The former act was in the exegesis of the Schoolmen the symbol of meditation, the latter of the power to distinguish dogmas such as the relation of the Father and the Son, of the Old and New Covenants (Aquin. *Summ. i. c. 102. 6*). Here the distinction which Dante has in view is that between the offices of the temporal and spiritual ruler. In its actions, therefore, (also symbolised by the hoof) the Papacy confounds these offices, and the lower good takes the place of the higher. It thus becomes a temporal and worldly power, seeking after earthly good, and clergy and laity alike follow its example. This is the "evil guidance" to which, rather than to any stellar influences or malignity of nature, the prevailing corruption of Christendom is to be traced (comp. *Mon. iii. 15*).

<sup>100</sup> The poet looks back, as in *Conv. iv. 5, Mon. ii. 3*, to the early Empire, chiefly, perhaps, to the period of the Antonines, as a golden age. Then the Emperor ruled righteously in temporal things, the successor of St. Peter (*H. ii. 24*) exercised an independent authority over the Church in spiritual things. The donation of Constantine (*H. xix. 113*) had spoiled every-thing.

<sup>101</sup> The two suns are, of course, the Emperor and the Pope. The comparison presents a marked, probably a deliberate, contrast to the ordinary Papal exegesis of the "greater" and "lesser" lights of *Gen. i. 16*, as representing the subjection of the Empire to the Church, from which it derived its authority. Not the sun and moon, but the two suns are the light of Christendom (comp. *Ep. vi. 2, Par. ii. 148 n., Mon. iii. 1, 4*).

<sup>102</sup> So, in like manner, the symbolism of the pastoral staff and of the sword points to the distinction, not the union, of the two methods of Divine government, of which the Temporal and Spiritual Powers are respectively the representatives. A priesthood exempted from the jurisdiction of the civil ruler lost the restraint of a salutary fear. The civil ruler, in his turn, was in spiritual things to be subject to the Roman Pontiff as a first-born son to his father (*Mon. iii. 15*).

Where Po and Adige water every mead, 113  
 Once courtesy and valour had their home,  
 Ere Frederick came his quarrel there to plead.  
 Now with full safety one that way may roam  
 Who will abstain, as touched by sense of shame,  
 From speaking with the good, nor near them come 120  
 True, three old men are left, whose lives throw blame  
 From the old age upon the new, and show  
 God seems the better life to let them claim  
 Conrado of Palazzo, Gherardo  
 The good, and Guido Castel, better styled 125  
 The simple Lombard, as the French words go.  
 Say henceforth that the Roman Church, beguiled  
 To blend two governments distinct in one,  
 Hath in the mire itself and them doled "

113 We enter on Dante's retrospect of the history of the previous century as an induction proving his position. Lombardy, Romagna, the Marca Trevigiana, described after Dante's manner (C. xiv. 92, H. viii. 61) by their rivers had, in the good old days of the emperors, from Barbarossa onwards, presented bright examples of a chivalrous life (C. xiv. 97-126, *Conv.* iv. 14). All had been ruined by the long conflict of Frederick II. with Honorius III., Gregory IX., and Innocent IV., and in that conflict each party the Popes pre-eminently, had usurped an authority which belonged to the other. In contrast with this ideal excellence, the grave irony of the poet speaks (perhaps from personal experience) of the "safety" with which a man may travel to and fro in that region, subject only to the condition that he avoids the good who are like minded with himself. The "good" are either the Ghibellines, or more probably those who, like Dante himself, shunned the falsehood of extremes (*Par.* viii. 61-69).

121 The state of Northern Italy was, from Dante's view, as bad as that of the Cities of the Plain (*Gen.* xviii. 23-33). In Florence there had been two righteous men (H. vi. 73), in the whole of Lombardy and Romagna there are only three, and they are advanced 31 years, and desire only to be taken to the "better life" behind the veil. Conrad da Palazzo was of Brescia, of whom commentators (probably paraphrasing Dante) speak in highest terms. Two facts are worth noting: (1) that he bore the banner of his city, and, when both hands were cut off in battle, clasped it in his arms (*Herz.*), and (2) that in 1296 he was chosen as Podestà in Piacenza. Of Gherardo da Camino of Treviso we know, over and above the adjectives of commentators, something more from Dante's own pen. He is arguing in *Conv.* iv. 24 against what we should call the doctrine of heredity. "The grandfather of Gherardo was," he says, "one of the worst scoundrels that drank the waters of Sile and Cagnano (rivers of the Trevigiana). Gherardo himself was honoured in life, and his memory was honoured still. Assuming 1308 as the date of the *Conv.*, this would involve Gherardo's death between 1300 and 1307, and this leaves little or no room for a tradition reported in *Arret.* 746, that Dante took refuge with him after his supposed quarrel with Can Grande. Other writers add that he was a patron of poets, and men of letters (Barozzi, *Dante e suo Secolo*, p. 803), and that in 1295 he conferred knighthood on Azzo VIII. of Este at Ferrara (*Murali Ann.* 1295). Guido da Castel of Romagna, honoured as the ruler and protector of that city, is named in *Con.* iv. 26 as nobler than Albino della Scala. He is said, but without adequate authority, to have been a writer of Italian poetry, to have been invited to the court of Can Grande to meet Dante, to have received the poet as his own guest. What is specially noted of him is that his fame had spread beyond his own countrymen, and that even the French, who had but one name far all Italians, spoke of him as the "simple Lombard." The *Rue des Lombards* in Paris, like our own "Lombard Street," is probably a survival of that old nomenclature. We note the adjective as having been used in C. vii. 130 of Henry III. of England.

126 The words embody the whole theory of the *De Mon.* The vice of the Papacy was that it insisted on absorbing the inherent rights of the Empire, confounded where it ought to have distinguished, and did not "divide the hoof." And so, in words which are reproduced from *V. E.* ii. 4, "it falls into the mire."

"O Marco mine," I said, "right well is shown 130  
 The proof, and now I see why Levi's race  
 Were left without a heritage, alone.  
 But what Gherardo nam'st thou of such grace  
 That he remains, as from a vanished age,  
 To show a barbarous world its foul disgrace?" 135  
 "Either thy speech deceives, or else would gauge  
 My knowledge," said he, "that, with Tuscan tongue,  
 Thou know'st not good Gherardo's lineage.  
 No other names I know to him belong,  
 Unless his daughter Gaia one supply. 140  
 God keep thee: I may not my course prolong.  
 Behold the dawn that gleams through dusky sky,  
 E'en now grows bright, and I must needs depart,—  
 Yonder the Angel comes—ere he draw nigh"  
 And he no more would hear, but walked apart. 145

### CANTO XVII.

*The Dream of the Passionate Ones—The Retrospect—The Fourth Circle—  
The Slothful.*

BETHINK thee, Reader, if on Alpine height,  
 A cloud hath wrapt thee, through which thou hast seen,  
 As the mole through its membrane sees the light,

<sup>130</sup> After the manner of his time, Dante reads his own theory into the rules of *Nam xviii* 20, *Josh xiii* 24. The Levites had no tribal inheritance, but were left to depend for all beyond their dwellings on the tithes and offerings of the people, and the Christian priesthood ought to have followed their example. Comp. the same thought in *C. xix.* 125, *Mon.* iii. 10.

<sup>140</sup> Of Gaia we have nothing but discordant guesses, assuming that she is stigmatised as the wanton, degenerate daughter of a noble father (*Benv.*, *Ott.*, *Phil.*), that she is named as being, like him, a pattern of all womanly excellence (*Serrav.*, *Anon.*, *Fior.*, *Buti.*). The apparent strangeness of Dante's assumed ignorance of the man whom we only know through him probably represents two facts: (1) that he did not even know Gherardo's name in 1300, (2) that he was surprised when he knew him of the excellence which had neither sought nor gained popularity. This is his way of indicating the contempt for mere notoriety which is expressed in *Conv.* iv. 16.

<sup>143</sup> The gleaming is not that of the sun—that could not penetrate through the dense smoke (*C. xvi.* 10)—but the brightness of the Angel of Peace, who is described more fully in *C. xvii.* 57.

<sup>144</sup> The soul was not allowed to appear before the angel until it had completed the full term of its purification.

<sup>1</sup> Another reminiscence of mountain travel, but the word "Alp" is to be taken in its generic sense of high pasture ground, and not as referring specially to the Alps of Switzerland or Savoy.

<sup>2</sup> The belief in the blindness of the mole may have been derived from Aristotle (*Hist. An.* i. 9), or Pliny (*H. N.* xi. 52), or still more probably from Brun. Latini (*Ter.* ii. 64). A modern Italian naturalist, Savi of Pisa, has, it may be noted, found in the Apennines a mole in which the eye is so minimised that he has classified it as a new species, *Talpa caeca*. Dante, however, implies partial vision.

How when the vapours moist and dense begin  
 Themselves to scatter, then the sun's bright sphere  
 All feebly enters in the clouds between :  
 And thus thy power of fancy will appear  
 Swift to discern how I at first again  
 The sun beheld, whose setting now was near  
 While with my Master's faithful steps were ta'en  
 Mine own in measured pace, I left the cloud,  
 For dying rays that fell on sea-washed plain.  
 O Power of Fancy, that full oft hast showed  
 Thy spell to rob our sense, that we hear not  
 Though round us thousand trumpets blare aloud,  
 Who moves thee, if sense hath her power forgot ?  
 By light thou then art moved which heaven doth range,  
*Per se*, or Will that doth its course allot.  
 Of her transgression who her form did change  
 Into the bird that most delights in song,  
 Then in my fancy came the vision strange ;  
 And so my mind withdrawn by impulse strong  
 Within itself, I failed to apprehend  
 What else upon my outward sense did throng  
 Then on my high-pitched fancy 'gan descend,  
 One on a cross, of scornful mood, with pride  
 In look and mien, and so his life did end.  
 The great Ahasuerus by his side  
 Stood with Queen Esther, and just Mordecai,  
 Who in all words and deeds was true and tried.

<sup>7</sup> I follow most commentators in taking "*leggera*" as conveying the sense of ease, not of difficulty.

<sup>12</sup> Virgil and Dante issued from the cloud, but it was near sunset, and the base of the Mountain was already shrouded in darkness.

<sup>13</sup> In this, as in C. xv. 11.-123, we have a distinct self-portraiture. As in the story from *Bocc. V. D.*, there referred to (8), that state of ecstasy when the mind was dead to all impressions through the senses was an experience sufficiently familiar. The "thousand trumpets," seems to refer almost specifically to the military procession at Siena of which he, plunged in meditation over a book, was utterly unconscious. In such a trance-like state the soul receives its impressions either from the heavens *per se, i. e.*, from stellar influences, or, as in the case of seers and prophets (and Dante would seem to class himself with that order), by a special act of God.

<sup>14</sup> The story of the incestuous passion of Tereus, king of Thrace, the husband of Procne, for his wife's sister Philomela, of Procne's terrible revenge, and of the transformation of all three and of Procne's son Itys into birds, is told in full by Ovid (*Met.* vi. 412-676), and need not be repeated here. Ovid, it may be noted, leaves it uncertain which of the two sisters was changed into a swallow, and which into a nightingale. Greek writers for the most part identify Procne, and Latin writers Philomela, with the bird of song. Dante manifestly follows the Latin tradition. Procne served as an example of murderous hate. It is scarcely conceivable that Dante could have preferred the song of the swallow to that of the nightingale. Comp. C. ix. 23, *Virg. Ecl.* vi. 81, *Arist. Rhet.* iii. 3.

<sup>15</sup> The second example is that of Haman (*Esth.* iii.-vii.). The *Psalm* represents him as

And as that image broke and passed away,  
 Of its own motion, like a bubble thin,  
 When fails the moisture, whence it sprang, to stay,  
 A maiden rose my dreaming thoughts within,  
 Who wept with bitter tears, and said "O Queen, 35  
 Why has wrath led thee 'gainst thy life to sin?  
 Not to lose me, Lavinia, thou hast been  
 Self-slain - now thou hast lost me, mother mine,  
 Grief for thy fate above all else is keen"  
 As sleep is broken, when new light doth shine 40  
 Upon the closed-up eye all suddenly,  
 And broken quivers, ere it life resign,  
 So vanished then mine airy phantasy,  
 Soon as a beam upon my features fell.  
 Far brighter than is wont to meet our eye. 45  
 I turned, that where I was I might see well,  
 When a voice said - "Lo! here the upward way,"  
 And left no room for other thought to dwell,  
 And made my will such eagerness display,  
 To look upon his face that spake to me, 50  
 As, till 'tis met, can never tranquil stay.  
 As at the sun which strains our power to see,  
 And veils its true form in excess of light,  
 So failed mo then my vision's faculty.  
 "A spirit this divine that gives us right 55  
 Direction in our way without our prayers,  
 And with his glory hides himself from sight.  
 For us, as man doth for himself, he cares,  
 For he who waits for prayer, yet sees tho need,  
 With grudging spirit to deny prepares 60

24 hung on a "gallows," but impaled or crucified, "*Et jussit excelsam parari crucem*" (*Eccl. v. 24*), and this is the meaning of the *Heb*

25 The dissolving views remind us of Shakespeare -

"The air hath bubbles, as the water hath,  
 And these are of them" - *Tempest*

26 For the story of Amata mother of Lavinia, who hanged herself in anticipation of the death of Turnus, and of Aeneas becoming, in his place, her daughter's husband, see *Æn. xii. 595*, which Dante expands. In his epistle to Henry VII. Dante refers to it as a warning against yielding to selfish passions instead of accepting apparent evil for the sake of a greater good (*Æp. vii. 7*).

27 The light is that of the Angel of Peace (*C. xvi. 142*), who points to the path that leads to the next circle, and who is, in Milton's phrase, "dark with excess of light," so dazzling in his glory that Dante cannot discern his form (*l. 57*).

28 The words, general enough in their form, seem to point to some personal experience of disappointment, when Dante had hoped for help from one who saw his need, but waited to

Let us, thus summoned, onward now proceed,  
 And haste to climb ere darkness falls apace,  
 Else, till day come, our power were small indeed.  
 Thus spake my Guide, and he and I our pace  
 Quick turned to where a stairway mounted high; 65  
 Soon as I reached the first step's resting place,  
 I heard the whirr, as if of wings, float by,  
 And fan me in the face, and utter "Blest  
 Those who make peace, nor know mahgnyty"  
 Then now so steeply upward in the West 70  
 Struck the last rays whereon night follows swift,  
 That far and wide above stars showed their crest  
 "O strength of manhood, why thus from me drift?"  
 I said within myself, as feeling gone  
 All power I had my limbs from earth to lift. 75  
 We had come there where further rise was none  
 Upon those steps, and so we halted there,  
 E'en as a ship rests, when the shore is won.  
 And while I listened so that I might hear  
 Aught in the circle new that opened thenceo, 80  
 Then said I, to my Master drawing near  
 "O my sweet Father, tell me what offence  
 Is cleansed in this round where we're arrived,  
 Though our feet stay, stay not thine eloquence"  
 And he to me "The love of good, deprived 85  
 Of its due power to act, is here restored,  
 And the slow oar finds here swift stroke revived

he asked and was then refused. It turned on Dante's sensitiveness that he was compelled to solicit the old hand of charity, and to solicit it in vain. Was he thinking of Henry VII?

<sup>63</sup> I me he had, it will be remembered, indicated the approach of night

<sup>65</sup> The salutation of the angel takes, as throughout, the form of one of the Beatitudes (*Matt* v 9). After the manner of Aquinas (*Summ* ii 2, 78 1, 2, 3) and Gregory the Great (*Mor* v 30), Dante distinguishes between the righteous anger against evil as such, and the evil passion which has its root in selfishness.

<sup>75</sup> Is this sudden sense of loss of strength symbolic of the new circle, that of Sullenness, or *accidia*, on which the pilgrim has now entered? or is it part of the law which Boccaccio had announced in *C. vii* 53, 54, that law representing the spiritual truth that the soul needs an interval of rest, a "retreat," as it were, after conquering one form of evil, before entering on its conflict with another.

<sup>85</sup> Dante's question is answered briefly. The sin of *accidia* is defined, nearly in the words of Aquinas (Greek *arêteia* = carelessness), as a spiritual sloth, the sluggishness of the soul in its love of good, "*Acedia ita deprimit animum hominis ut nihil ei agere libeat*" (*Aquin Summ* i 73, 2). But beyond that answer Dante veers on the opening for a theological lecture, the "meditation" of the "retreat," such as he delighted in, and such as he had already given in *Conv* iii 2, iv 22, on the nature of the love of good in its true and its perverted states. In this, after his manner, he follows Aquinas and Augustine, the latter of whom defines virtue as "*amor ordinatus*," vice as "*amor non ordinatus*" (*Civ D* xv 22).



And I, as spurred by thirst that nought allays,  
 Without was mute, but said within, "Perchance,  
 He grieves that I o'er-many questions raise " 5  
 But that true Father, seeing, at a glance,  
 The timid wish that kept itself concealed,  
 Speaking, gave my speech courage to advance.  
 And I: "O Master, so my sight lives healed, 10  
 In this thy light, that I discern full clear,  
 Whate'er thy speech implies or hath revealed.  
 Wherefore I pray thee, gentle Father dear,  
 That thou show me that love from whence arise  
 All acts that good or otherwise appear " 15  
 "Turn thou to me," said he, "the eager eyes  
 Of thy keen spirit, this will manifest  
 The error of blind leaders, self-styled wise  
 The soul, that's made in love to find its rest,  
 Is moved by all that comes in pleasure's hue, 20  
 Soon as by pleasure it to act is press'd.  
 Your power perceptive from some object true  
 Impression draws, and it unfolds within,  
 So that the soul it doth to gaze subdue ,  
 And if thus turned, it bends itself to win, 25  
 Love is that bending, that is Nature's might,  
 By pleasure new created, and bound in  
 Then, as the fire mounts upward to the height,  
 By its own essence which is made to rise  
 There, where on kindred matter it doth light, 30  
 So the soul captive to its longing flies,—  
 The spirit's motion—and then rest knows none,  
 Till the thing loved fruition full supplies.  
 Now may appear to thee how little known  
 Is truth unto those people who maintain 35  
 That to all love *per se* may praise be shown ,

<sup>6</sup> We have what reads like a reproduction of what Dante had felt in actual converse with some honoured teacher. Was it a reminiscence of the days when he was content to sit at Brunetto Latini's feet? (*H* xv 85)

<sup>18</sup> The error of the blind leaders of the blind is that of the Epicureans, who contended that as man's desires naturally turned to good, every such desire must, *ipso facto*, be worthy of praise and therefore to be gratified (l. 36). Line 19 throws us back on the picture of the new-born soul seeking whatever gives delight (*C* xvi 86). That inclination is, however, consequent on the ideal picture which the mind forms to itself of what is likely to give pleasure. But that picture may, through the weakness of man's intellect, fail to correspond with the

Because perchance its substance praise may gain  
 As always good, yet not each seal's impress  
 Is good, though good the wax itself remain."  
 "Thy language, and my following mind no less 40  
 Behind thee," said I, "show me what is Love,  
 But this begets in me more doubt's distress,  
 For if Love from without our mind doth move,  
 And the soul moveth not with other feet,  
 Then neither right nor wrong doth merit prove" 45  
 And he to me: "What reason's sight doth meet,  
 That I can tell, beyond it thou must wait  
 For Beatrice, faith's work to complete.  
 Each form substantial, which is separate  
 From matter, yet with it in union bound, 50  
 In special virtue doth participate.  
 This, without act, is still by sense unfound,  
 And shows itself through its effects alone,  
 As life in plant when green leaves spread around,  
 Wherefore in man must still remain unknown 55  
 What is the source of first cognitions true,  
 And how of things we seek desires have grown,

reality. The subjective good may not be identical with the objective. The "wax," *i.e.*, the desire for good, may be natural, and so far good in itself, but it receives a wrong impression from the seal of the imagination. Comp. *Little and Phil in loco*, and *Ode* p. 124.

41 In the dialogue between the Master and the Scholar we have a suggestive type of the scholastic disputations of a mediaeval university, such as Dante may himself have taken part in at Paris or Oxford or Bologna. Comp. *Par* xxiv, xxv, xxviii. If we cannot help loving, and therefore pursuing, the external object which our imagination pictures to us as conducive to our good, where does free will come in? What in that case is the function of the moral sense before action, or of conscience after it? Are we not shut up to a theory of determinism, *i.e.*, of necessity, which is fatal to human responsibility?

47 Virgil, as the representative of human wisdom, admits that he can offer but a partial solution of the problem of free will. That must come from Beatrice, as representing the supernatural light of a revealed wisdom, *i.e.*, as the theology which is the *Scientia Scientiarum*.

49 The soul is, in scholastic terminology, the "substantial form," *i.e.*, the essence, of man's nature. Without it the man is not. As such, it has its own specific virtue, *i.e.*, its own ideas, tendencies, and capacities. These are known in their effects, as the nature of the plant is known by its leaves and flowers and fruits, as the instinct of the bee is seen in its making honey, but what is the source either of the primal conceptions or the primal desires, whether innate, inspired, or determined by stellar influences or a law of heredity, Dante will not say. The first desires, even if directed to counterfeits of good, are simply neutral, deserving neither praise nor blame, but with them there is innate in the soul (here Dante is not doubtful, for with him it was a primary fact of consciousness) a power that judges, warns, advises, — what we know as conscience. This stands as warder at the gate through which desire passes into act, brings with it the sense of merit or demerit, is the foundation of human liberty, and therefore of all systems of ethics which are worthy of the name, chiefly that of the "Master of those who know" (*H* iv 131, comp. *Mon* i 12). Hence, even if we allow that every desire in men may be traced to a law of cause and effect, and admit so far the postulates of Determinism, there is yet a "noble virtue" in man, which theology, embodied in Beatrice, recognises as keeping man from being bound hand and foot in the iron chain of necessity. Comp. *Par* v 19.

Which, as the bee seeks honey, so in you  
 Are found as instinct, and to this first will  
 No merit or of praise or blame is due. 60  
 Now since round this all others cluster still,  
 Virtue innate that counsels, in you dwells,  
 And o'er assent should watchman's part fulfil.  
 This is the source, from which, as fountain, wells  
 Merit's true cause in you, accordingly 65  
 As it takes good or bad loves, or repels.  
 They, who in reasoning did the depths descry,  
 Perceived in man this liberty innate,  
 So to the world they left Morality.  
 Hence let us say that though each love may date, 70  
 As from necessity, in you its rise,  
 Yours is the power to guide and moderate.  
 That noble power thy Beatrice describes  
 In the free will, seek therefore thou to know  
 Thou hast it, if of it she thee advise " 75  
 The moon, as though at midnight wandering slow,  
 Shaped like a bucket all in fiery sheen,  
 Made the stars few and feeble in their glow,  
 And moving 'gainst the heavens its course was seen,  
 In paths the sun inflames when he of Rome 80  
 Sees it go down 'twixt Corsi and Sardine.  
 And that high soul who made of old his home,  
 Pietola, than Mantua more renowned,  
 Had made my doubts no longer burdensome.  
 Whence I, who to my questions now had found 85  
 An answer that was manifest and plain,  
 Stood like a man in dreamy slumbers bound.  
 But from me soon that somnolence was ta'en  
 Full suddenly, by crowd who then behind  
 Our backs had turned, and on our steps did gain. 90

<sup>77</sup> The moon was rising at or about midnight. Astronomical commentators range from 11 to 11 58 P. M., and it was, it will be remembered, the Paschal moon five days after the full. At that season the inhabitant of Rome (Dante was probably at Rome at the assumed date of the vision) sees the sun setting at a point through which a line would pass between Corsica and Sardinia. The moon was semi-globular or gibbous, like a bucket, the stars paled before it. *A v l* "*scheggon*" gives "like a crag."

<sup>88</sup> Andes near Mantua, the birthplace of Virgil, identified with the mediæval Pietola

<sup>89</sup> The "drowsiness" which reminds us of C. ix 11, xxvii. 92, may in part be connected with the sin of *accidia* from which the pilgrim is now to be purified, in part perhaps with the

As, where Ismenus and Asôpus wind,  
 Men saw of old by night wild tumult held,  
 When Thebos had need for Bacchus to be kind,  
 So on that circle, far as I beheld,  
 Came on a troop with eager step who trode, 95  
 By good will and a righteous love impelled.  
 Soon they were on us, for upon their road  
 With speed they ran, that whole crowd's wide extent,  
 And two in front cried out, as tears down flowed  
 "Mary in haste unto the mountain went;" 100  
 And "Cæsar, firm Herda to subdue,  
 Massilia crushed, to Spain his footsteps bent."  
 "Haste, haste! that time may not be lost by you,  
 Through lack of love" forthwith the others cried,  
 "That zeal in doing good may grace renew" 105  
 "O ye, in whom keen will intensified  
 Atones perchance for slackness and delay,  
 When your good deeds by lukewarm soul were tied,  
 This living man—and here no lie I say,—  
 Seeks, if the sun relight us, to ascend: 110  
 So tell us where the pass yields nearest way"  
 These were the words of him, my Guide and Friend  
 And one of those same spirits said, "Come near  
 Behind, and to the opening thou shalt wend.

weariness of the natural man after the tension of the brain-power on such profound mysteries. For him, as perhaps for us, it was a refreshment to come into contact with human feelings and experiences.

91 The comparison comes from Statius (*Theb* ix 434). Asôpus and Ismenus are the two rivers of Thèbes, along the banks of which rushed the processions of the worshippers of Bacchus with their wild orgiastic cries. Comp Eurip *Bacch*. The speed of the souls that draw near shows that they have already in part conquered their besetting sin.

100 As elsewhere, the examples which are the spurs of action are drawn both from sacred history (*Luke* i 39) and from secular. The reference to Cæsar comes from Lucan (i 151, iii, iv). The motive of selection in each case was that each was unconsciously looking to wards the manifestation of Dante's ideal of a perfect polity as seen in the right union of the Empire and the Church of Christ (*Mon* iii *ad fin*, *Weg* 522). Herda, now Lerida was the scene of the battle in which Cæsar defeated the two generals of Pompeius, Afranius and Petreus.

105 I have taken "grace" as the object, not the subject of the sentence, but the words admit of either rendering. What Dante seems to teach is the scholastic doctrine of "grace of congruity," i.e., that the efforts of men to do good are effective in making them meet to receive grace for doing it. The doctrine is condemned by the Church of England in Art xiii, which teaches to recognise God's grace even in those efforts.

114 The souls of the sullen, now so quick to move, are moving under the moonlight from left to right. They cannot stop, and have to apologise for the seeming want of courtesy to which they are led by their new-born righteousness, i.e., by their desire to meet the requirements of the Divine righteousness.

So strong our will a forward course to steer, 115  
 We cannot stay ourselves, so pardon thou,  
 If this our duty rudeness should appear  
 I, at Verona, took St. Zeno's vow  
 As Abbot, under Barbarossa brave,  
 Of whom in sorrow Milan speaks e'en now, 120  
 And one there is with one foot in the grave,  
 Who shall ere long that monastery rue,  
 And in his power there find a burden grave,  
 Because his son, in body foul to view,  
 And worse in mind, and illegitimate, 125  
 He hath set up in place of shepherd true "  
 If more he said, or ceased, I cannot state,  
 So great a space already lay between ;  
 But thus I heard and gladly now relate.  
 And he who in all need my help had been, 130  
 Said, " Turn thou this way, and behold these two  
 Putting sharp bit on coward souls and mean "  
 In rear of all they cried, " That wretched crew  
 To whom the Red Sea opened, all were dead,  
 Ere Jordan might the heirs of promise view ; 135

<sup>114</sup> Who the abbot was we are left to guess. The early commentators name an Alberto, but no such name is found in the records of the Abbey of St. Zeno in Barbarossa's reign (1157-1190). The chief abbot of that time was a Gherardo (*d.* 1178), who was invested by the Emperor with jurisdiction over many villages near Verona, but the few facts recorded of him, his restoration of the church and the erection of a new campanile, seem to speak of activity rather than sloth. From his studies of Veronese history, Dante perhaps knew, while at the Court of Can Grande, more of his inner life, and wished to point the moral that there may be spiritual sluggishness in the midst of outward diligence.

<sup>119</sup> There seems no reason for taking "good" as ironical, as many have done. From Dante's standpoint Barbarossa embodied the imperial ideal, was brave, chivalrous, and, in many things noble, and even the cruelty with which he treated Milan and Cremona would seem to the poet little more than a righteous judgment on their rebellion against a Divine order. Comp. the Epist. to the Florentines.

<sup>121</sup> Here the commentators are for once agreed. The prophetic words speak of Alberto della Scala (*d.* 1301). He had three legitimate sons, Bartolommeo (*d.* 1304), Alboin (*d.* 1311), and Francesco, better known as Can Grande, and besides these a bastard son Giuseppe, whom he made Abbot of St. Zeno (1291-1314) to the great injury of the discipline and reputation of the monastery, and, as Dante intimates, to his own infinite loss. The chronicle reports many acts of violence and outrage on the part of the abbot, some describing him as only "*seme canno*" with something of the insanity of Caligula. The mere fact of his illegitimacy ought to have been, by the Canon law, a bar to his promotion. He himself left a natural son who was Abbot of St. Zeno in 1321, and afterwards Bishop of Verona. The question naturally rises whether these words ever came to the knowledge of Can Grande, Dante's protector, the hero of *H.* i. 101, and *Par.* xvii. 71, and whether they were written before or after Dante's traditional quarrel with him?

<sup>123</sup> As before, examples are followed by warnings. The Israelites who came out of Egypt (comp. C. ii. 46) perished through their coward sloth, and did not enter on the inheritance of Canaan (*Numb.* xiv. *Deut.* i. 26-36, *Heb.* iii. 15-19). Many of the companions of Æneas chose to remain in Sicily with Acestes (*Æn.* v. 746-761), and so forfeited their share in the inheritance of Italy. They chose safety rather than glory, and that was the essence of the sin of *accidia*.

And they who from the toil and trouble fled,  
 Nor with Anchises' son endured the end,  
 Passed to a life on which no fame was shed."  
 Then, when apart from us those souls did wend  
 So far from us, we saw their face no more, 140  
 A new thought in my spirit 'gan ascend,  
 From this were others born of diverso race,  
 And so from this to that I rambled on,  
 That wandering thus mine eyelids closed apace,  
 And I to dream changed meditation. 145

## CANTO XIX.

*The Dream of the Siren—The Angel of the Fifth Circle—The Lovers of  
 Money—Pope Hadrian V.*

It was the hour at which day's heat doth fail  
 Longer to warm the coldness of the moon,  
 When o'er it Earth's or Saturn's chills prevail,  
 When geomancers see their Great Fortune  
 In the far East before the break of day, 5  
 Rise by a path still dim, to brighten soon,  
 I saw in dreams a woman pass that way,  
 Stammering, cross-eyed, and with misshapen form,  
 Who did maimed hands and pallid face display

141 The picture that follows is another instance of self-portraiture. I thought crowds on thought till at last the stage of ecstasy is reached, and there comes the vision with which C. XIX opens. It is noticeable that in this circle alone there is no request for the intercessory prayers of others. Is there an implied retribution in this omission? Were they who had been so negligent and apathetic on earth, now to "dree their weird," unaided by the sympathy of others?

1 The hour at which dreams are true (C. ix. 18, II. xxvi. 7) is defined, after Dante's manner, as that at which the night temperature attains its *maximum* of cold. The moon and Saturn were supposed to radiate cold, as also was the earth, after it had parted with the heat absorbed during the day from the sun. It was, *i. e.*, just before daybreak.

4 The words refer to an elaborate system of divination, which consisted in marking sand or paper at random with an indefinite number of dots, which were then formed, according to certain rules, into sixteen squares, the dots in which received their names according as they approximated more or less closely to the figures of certain constellations. The "greater fortune" was that in which the dots represented the position of the stars in Aquarius and Pisces, or possibly those of Ursa Major (*Phil.*)

7 The form which appears in the poet's vision is defined in l. 19 as that of the Siren, in l. 38 as that of the "ancient sorceress," who represents the sins which remain to be cleansed in the upper circles of the Mount, *i. e.*, the love of lower good, as seen in avarice, gluttony, and lust. The vision seems in part a reproduction of *Prov.* vii. 10-12, the distorted eyes, the bent form, the crippled hands, the extreme pallor corresponding to the physiognomic signs of those evil passions.

I looked on her, and as the sunbeams warm 10  
     The stiff cold limbs which were benumbed by night,  
     So then my gaze her tongue to speak did charm,  
 And made her soon stand up with form upright,  
     As in a moment, and her pallid face,  
     As Love would wish it, rosy grew and bright. 15  
 And when her speech, thus loosened, flowed apace,  
     She poured out song so sweet, that I with pain  
     Had turned my thoughts from dwelling on her grace  
 "I the sweet Siren am," so ran her strain,  
     "Whose spells bewilder sailors in mid sea ; 20  
     So sweet to him who hears is my refrain.  
 Ulysses changed his course to look on me,  
     Lured by my song, and who by it is won  
     Is slow to leave, so full content is he "  
 Her lips were not yet closed, her song not done, 25  
     Before a saintly lady fair drew near,  
     On her to pour extreme confusion.  
 "O Virgil, Virgil ! whom behold I here ?"  
     Sternly she said , and then he nearer came  
     With eyes full fixed upon the nobler fair. 30  
 That other one he seized and put to shame,  
     Laid bare her body, stripping every shred ,—  
     The stench woke me that issued from the same.

<sup>10</sup> The transformation which follows on the poet's gaze, the flush of "celestial rosy red, love's proper hue" (Milton *P L* viii 619), which comes over the pallor, the free speech which takes the place of the stammering tongue, set forth the danger of tampering with the first impressions made by evil on our better nature. Vice becomes attractive because, and in proportion as, we gaze on it. Pope unconsciously reproduced Dante when he wrote—

"Vice is a monster of such hideous mien  
 As to be hated needs but to be seen  
 Yet seen too oft, familiar with her face,  
 We first endure, then pity, then embrace"

*Ess on Man*, ii 219-223

<sup>19</sup> The comparison implies a knowledge of the story of Ulysses as told in *Od* xii 39-54. The Sirens of Greek mythology were the daughters of Melpomene and Achelous, deriving their gift of song from the former. Possibly, as Dante had probably not read Homer, he thinks of Circe as one of the Sirens. Those whom Homer names as such had not turned Ulysses and his companions from their course.

<sup>20</sup> The "holy lady" who appears to rescue Dante from the evil fascination of the Siren is obviously the symbol of the Wisdom of *Prov* viii 1, of the true blessedness which exposes all counterfeits, possibly, therefore, like the Lucia of *C* ix 55 and *II* ii 97, of the grace of illumination. The whole scene reminds us of the choice of Hercules as told in Xen *Mem* ii 1, 17, *Cic de Off* i 32, from the latter of which Dante probably derived his imagery. Comp also Boeth i 1.

<sup>21</sup> The words imply reproach, as though Virgil had been guilty of some negligence in permitting his scholar to come within the range of the Siren's fascinations.

<sup>22</sup> The description that follows is somewhat shocking to the delicacy of modern refinement, but Dante had studied in the school of the Hebrew prophets, and his words are but as an

I turned mine eyes, and my good Virgil said,  
 "Thrice have I called thee: rise and come this way, 35  
 Find we the door by which thy path to tread."  
 I rose, and now irradiate with full day  
 Were all the circles of the sacred mount,  
 And the new sun behind us poured its ray.  
 And following him I went with bended front, 40  
 As one who is by care's sore burden bound,  
 And bends, as half-arch of a bridge is wont,  
 When I heard. "Come; lo! here the pass is found,"  
 Spoken in tone so sweet and so benign,  
 As doth not in our mortal country sound. 45  
 With open wings, which like a swan's did shine,  
 Upward he led us who to us thus spake,  
 Where the two granite walls the path confine  
 He moved his wings, and fresh breeze on us brake,  
 Affirming those *qui lugent* to be blest, 50  
 For now their souls shall sovran comfort take.  
 "What ails thee, with thy looks to earth deprest?"  
 Began my Guide to say to me, when we  
 Had somewhat passed the Angel there at rest;  
 And I "Such dark misgivings come on me 55  
 From the new vision which absorbs me so,  
 I cannot from its contemplation flee."  
 "Thou hast beheld," said he, "that old witch foe,  
 Whose work alone above us causes pain.  
 How man escapes her, this thou too dost know. 60

echo of *Isai* iii 24, *Ezek* xvi 37, xxiii 70. Men must learn to see in evil a foulness that they loathe, that literally "turns their stomach." With that nausea the dream ends, the spell of the illusion is broken.

<sup>34</sup> The MSS vary between "*e mentire voci*" (verb) and "*almen tre voci*" (noun). The latter seems preferable.

<sup>37</sup> An hour or more had passed during the dream, and it is now broad daylight on the morning of Easter Tuesday, March 29th. The sun is behind the travellers as they move onward to the west, towards the fifth circle of the mountain.

<sup>40</sup> Another touch of self-portraiture. "*Anid' alquanto curvetto*" (Bocc. I. D.) "*Curvatis aliquantulum renibus incedebat*" (Vill. V. D.).

<sup>45</sup> The voice is that of the angel who points out the passage by which they are to ascend. Dante uses *marca* (= Goth. *mark*) in the sense of region, as in the "*Marca Trevigiana*."

<sup>48</sup> The two granite walls symbolize probably the strength and constancy which the pilgrim needs in his conflict with temptation.

<sup>50</sup> The beatitude of *Matt* v. 4 proclaims the victory over the sin of *accidia* or sloth, that has its root in man's shrinking from the pain of effort. He who accepts that pain shall be comforted, his soul shall be mistress of every true element of consolation.

<sup>55</sup> The dream still fills the pilgrim's mind with vague apprehension. Virgil, like Daniel, knows both the dream and its interpretation (*Dan* ii 19-45). The sorceress represents the



Let this suffice ; now tramp along amain ;  
 Look upwards to the lure tho Eternal King  
 Whirls in the great sphere of His mighty reign."  
 Like falcon that its glance below doth fling,  
 Then turns him to the call, and forward darts, 65  
 Through strong desire for food, with eager wing,  
 So acted I, and where the hard rock parts,  
 To open path for him who mounts above,  
 I went to where it for its circuit starts.  
 In the fifth circle where I now did move, 70  
 I saw a people weeping very sore,  
 Prostrate, with face that n<sup>o</sup>er from ear<sup>h</sup> did rove  
 "*Adhæsit pavimento*" evermore  
 I heard them say with such oppressive sighs,  
 Scarce knew I what the words they muttered o'er 75  
 "O chosen ones of God, whose miseries  
 Justice and hope both render less severe,  
 Direct us where tho high steps upward rise"  
 "If so as free from bowing down come here,  
 And wish to find the quickest onward way, 80  
 Let your right hands still outward turned appear"  
 So questioned them the Poet, and so they  
 Made answer in advance of us, and I  
 Marked, as they spoke, the one who hidden lay,

counterfeit show of good that leads to the threefold sin of the remaining circles. Man is emancipated from her spells by seeing her in all her foulness.

<sup>63</sup> Another image from the art of falconry. Comp *H* viii 127, xii 130, *Par* xix 34. The counter-attraction to the charms of vice are found in the beauty and glory of the heavens, (*P* l 1 681), with this to give quickness to his footsteps, as the falcon who, from his perch or from his master's wrist, spreads his wings, to fly towards his prey, the pilgrim mounts to the fifth circle. Comp the Emperor Frederick II, *De Arte Ven* ii 60.

<sup>71</sup> As in *H* vii 25-66, the prodigal and the avaricious are grouped together as exhibiting different aspects of the same evil. On earth their looks, like those of Milton's Mammon (*P* l 1 681), have been ever 'downward bent,' and their penance is to lie prostrate on the earth, uttering the words of *P* l xix 25. Those words form part of the service of Prime in the *Rom. Brev.*, and it was at this hour (l 2) that Dante hears them in Purgatory. Comp *C* viii 13, ix 140, for a like correspondence. We may call to mind the concluding words of that verse, "Quicken I thou me according to Thy word."

<sup>76</sup> As before, in *C* iii 73, xiii 143, Dante speaks to the souls in Purgatory in words that are full at once of courtesy and comfort. Such should be the tone of every soul seeking its own purification towards others who are under a like discipline for like sins.

<sup>79</sup> The speaker is, as we learn from l 99, Pope Hadrian V. He assumes that the questioner who asks the way to the sixth circle has no need of the discipline of prostration, and tells them to go on, turning ever to the right.

<sup>84</sup> Commentators involve themselves in much perplexity as to the other "hidden" person or thought. Was it hidden in Dante's mind or that of the speaker? Was it that the latter did not know that the pilgrim was still living, or that the former did not know who the speaker was? The last seems the most probable solution of the problem. Comp *Il* 95, 96.

And to my Lord and Master turned mine eye 85  
 And then he granted with glad look and mien  
 That which my glances asked for wistfully.  
 And I, when power to act had granted been,  
 Drew myself on, above that creature there,  
 Whose words had made me note him yet unseen, 90  
 And said: "O soul in whom thy tears prepare  
 That without which we cannot turn to God,  
 Stay for my sake awhile thy greater care  
 Who wast thou, and why thus your backs are showed,  
 Tell me, I pray, and if thou wilt that I 95  
 Thither bear aught whence living late I strode"  
 And he to me: "Why thus towards the sky  
 Our backs are turned, thou'lt learn, but I disclose  
 First that *successor Petri* once was I.  
 Between Sestri and Chiaveri flows 100  
 A river fair to look on, and its name  
 Upon my lineage highest lustre throws.  
 For one short month the knowledge to me came,  
 How the great robe loads him who keeps it white,  
 So that all else as light as down became 105  
 Full late, ah me! my turning to the light!  
 But when they made me Shepherd of great Rome,  
 Life's falsehood then came clearly into sight.  
 I saw that thence no rest of heart could come,  
 Nor could it in that life mount up more high, 110  
 So Love burnt in me here to seek my home.

<sup>85</sup> The pilgrim and his guide interchange glances and the hints of the latter tell the former that he may gratify his thirst for further knowledge

<sup>92</sup> The condition of turning to God is of course, a true and earnest repentance. That is the "greater cure" which Dante asks the soul to suspend for a brief moment that he may learn who he is, and, it may be, help him by his own prayers or by commending him to the prayers of others

<sup>90</sup> The speaker is Ottobono Fieschi, of Genoa, elected Pope as Hadrian V., July 12, 1276, who died at Viterbo on August 3rd of the same year. Sestri and Chiaveri are two towns of the Eastern Riviera which were subject to Genoa. The river is the Lavagna, from which the Fieschi family took their title as counts. Hadrian died before his admission to the priesthood, and therefore was neither consecrated nor crowned as Pope. Dante, speaking probably from his knowledge of family traditions (l. 142), represents him as having had his eyes opened by the responsibilities of his high position to the evil love of money which had been the canker of his past life. Precisely at the highest position which life could offer, he discovered that it was "vanity of vanities." As his conversion came thus late, he must have spent some years in the *Ante Purgatorium*, shortened possibly by the prayers of Alagia and others who loved his memory. In the fact that he had been sent by Innocent IV. in 1268 as a legate to reconcile the King, Henry III., and his barons, and to reform abuses in the Church, we have a point of contact with our own history (*Lingard*, iii. 2, Milm. L. C. vi. 409).

Up to that point full wretched soul was I,  
 And severed from my God, the prey of greed :  
 Now, as thou see'st, I pay the penalty.  
 What Avarice works is here made clear indeed 115  
 In this purgation of souls penitent •  
 No sin in all the Mount reaps sharper meed.  
 E'en as our eye was never upwards sent,  
 But ever fixed upon the things of earth,  
 So justice here our forms to earth hath bent. 120  
 As Avarice quenched our love for all true worth  
 Of goodness, whence our labour all was waste,  
 So Justice keeps us bound in tightest girth,  
 Fetters our feet and hands, by chains embraced ,  
 And long as it shall please the righteous Sire, 125  
 Shall we our pain, unmoved and stretched out, taste ”  
 I knelt to him as one who would enquire,  
 But o'en as I began, and he was 'ware,  
 Through listening, of that homage of desire :  
 “ What cause,” said he, “ hath bent thee downward there ? ”  
 And I to him . “ For that thy dignity, 131  
 My conscience did correction sharp prepare.”  
 “ Straighten thy legs and rise,” he made reply.  
 “ O brother, err not ; to one mightier Power  
 With thee and others, fellow-servant I. 135  
 If thou those words hast heard at any hour,  
 Which *Neque nubent* in the Gospel sounds,  
 Thou well may'st see how thus my thoughts I pour.  
 Now go thy way , I would not stay thy round ;  
 Thy tarrying here my weeping doth delay, 140  
 Wherewith I npon what thy words expound.

115 See note on l. 71 for the law of retribution here stated

133 Hadrian has learnt the lesson of *Acts* x. 25, *Rom.* xix. 10, *xxii.* 9. Another note of humility is that instead of using the customary formula of Popes in addressing others, as “ My son,” he speaks to Dante as a brother

136 The words point to a somewhat subtle reason for the renunciation of Papal dignity. The Pope was the spouse of the Church (*C.* xxiv. 22, *II.* xix. 56), but the ties of that, as of other marriages, are dissolved by death (*Matt.* xxii. 30). The Papacy was not like the priesthood, which impressed on the soul, in scholastic language, a *character indelibilis*

139 Dante has spoken (l. 92) of the soul's return to God. The repentant soul wishes that no farther converse may delay that return

My niece Alagia yet on earth doth stay,  
 Good in herself, unless our heritage  
 By bad example lead her too astray;  
 She only lives of all my lineage."

143

### CANTO XX.

*Examples of Holy Poverty—The Story of Hugh Capet—The Evil Kings of  
 France—The Trembling of the Mountain.*

ILL fights our will against a will more true,  
 Wherefore, against my pleasure, him to please,  
 I from the water sponge unfilled withdrew.  
 I moved, my Teacher also moved, where ease  
 Of access met us, by the rough rock's face,  
 As on a wall, we near the rampart squeeze.  
 For on the outer side too near, the race  
 Was seen who still shed, drop by drop, in tears,  
 The ill which doth the whole wide world embrace.  
 Accurst art thou, thou wolf of ancient years,  
 Who hast far more than other beasts thy prey,  
 Through hunger vast to which no end appears.  
 O Heaven, by whose revolving course some say  
 In this our earthly state doth change ensue,  
 When will He come who'll chase her far away?

5

10

15

<sup>142</sup> Alagia, wife of Moroello Malaspina, was the daughter of Hadrian's brother, Niccolò Fieschi, and this was perhaps the reason of the special mention made of her, of Currado Malaspina (C. viii 118, H xxiv 145), of Lunigiana, and of her husband, Dante's friend and protector, to whom he is said to have dedicated his *Purgatorio*. From her he probably learnt the story of her uncle's conversion.

<sup>143</sup> Two possible reasons have been assigned for this general condemnation: (1) that the Fieschi were, as a rule, on the Guelph side in politics; (2) that one of them who was appointed Vicar-General of Florence by the Emperor Rodolph in 1287 had inflicted on its citizens a fine of 60,000 marks (*Vill* vii 112). Probably, however, the word's hint at the misconduct of other women of the Fieschi family, which led Hadrian to desire no other prayers than those of Alagia. The words, if written, as is probable, while Alagia was living, are at once a subtle praise and a yet more subtle utterance of hate.

<sup>1</sup> The "better will" of Hadrian to complete his purification prevails over Dante's desire to know more.

<sup>5</sup> The pathway which the pilgrim takes is like one on the wall of a city, on which the travellers keep close to the battlements to avoid falling. They pass by those who, like Hadrian, are suffering from the sin which of all sins had the widest range of evil. The "wolf," as in H i 49, is avarice.

<sup>13</sup> Dante seems to accept the notion of stellar influences as affecting the order of events as at least a probable opinion (*Pes* xiv. 67). Line 13 is a sign for the coming of the *Veltro*, the

Onward we went with footsteps slow and few,  
 And I, upon those souls around intent,  
 Heard them their moans and wailing still renew,  
 And heard by chance their cry, "Sweet Mary," sent  
 Before us, as they wailed, and made their moan, 20  
 Like woman in her pangs of travail bent  
 And in continuance came, "Full well was known  
 How poor thou wert by that low hostelry  
 Where thou didst lay thy holy burden down."  
 And next, "O good Fabricius" came the cry, 25  
 "Thou didst choose virtue with a poor estate  
 Rather than guilt with great wealth's pageantry."  
 These words to me brought pleasantness so great  
 That I went on, more converse so to hold  
 With that soul whence they seemed to emanate 30  
 He then the tale of generous bounty told  
 Which Nicolaos to the maidens gave,  
 To keep their youth within pure honour's fold  
 "O soul, who speakest words so good and brave,  
 Say who thou wast," I said, "and why alone 35  
 Thou dost renew those praises high and grave?  
 Nor shall thy speech unrecompensed be shown,  
 If I return, the brief path to complete  
 Of this our life which to its goal speeds on"  
 And he "I'll tell thee, not for comfort sweet, 40  
 Which thence I hope for, but because in thee  
 Such great grace shines ere thou with death dost meet.

greyhound of *H* 1 101. Who shall chase the wolf away? It implies the feeling that as yet neither Uguccione, nor Morcello, nor even Can Grande, had accomplished that work. The cry of the idealist reformer is still "How long, O Lord, how long?" (*Rev* vi 10)

<sup>21</sup> As elsewhere, a floating voice teaches the lay-ones that the avaricious need, and the first is found in the poverty of the Virgin and the stable of Bethlehem

<sup>22</sup> Fabricius C. Luscius, whose whole life was a protest against greed of gain, who, as Censor, had banished P. Cornelius Rufinus for his luxury and prodigality, who refused the gifts offered him by the Samnites, and died so poor that he had to be buried at the public cost, was clearly one of Dante's heroes (*Conv* iv 5, *Mon* ii 5, 10), as he had been one of Virgil's (*Æn* vi 844)

<sup>23</sup> The story of S. Nicolaus, Bishop of Myra in Lycia (*Acts* 325), held in especial honour at Bari, which boasted of possessing his remains, was that he, learning that a father who had three daughters was tempted by extreme poverty to expose them to a life of dishonour, went by night and threw into the window of his house three bags of money which served as a marriage portion for each, and thus rescued them from shame. Aquinas refers to the story, *Summa* ii 2, 107 3

<sup>24</sup> The words have been differently explained as meaning either (1) that the speaker, who is identified in l. 43 with Hugh Capet, the founder of the dynasty of French kings, had passed beyond all care for earthly fame, or (2) that he had no hope of any availing prayers from his descendants, or (3) that the appointed time of his cleansing had nearly come, so that he had no need of earthly prayers. Of these (3) seems the most probable

I was the root of that ill progeny  
 Which so o'erclouds the face of Christendom,  
 That seldom good fruit gathered there we see. 45  
 But if to Douay, Bruges, Ghent, Lille should come  
 The power to act, on it would vengeance fall.  
 May the great Judge of all drive that blow home!  
 Me as Hugh Capet men of old did call,  
 From me the lines of Philips, Louis' run, 50  
 Who in late days in France have governed all  
 I of a Paris butcher was the son.  
 What time the line of ancient kings gave way,  
 Save one reduced the garments grey to don.  
 Fast in my hands I found the reins that sway 55  
 The government of kingdoms, and such power  
 Of new acquist, and friends in full array,  
 That to the crown, left widowed in that hour,  
 My son's head was promoted, and from thence  
 Those bodies sprang that claimed the sacred dower 60  
 Till the great appanage of fair Provence  
 My lineage had deprived of sense of shame,  
 Small was their power, but no ill-deed sprang thence

45 The words that follow embody the concentrated hatred which the poet felt for the kings of France, and the evil they had wrought in the world. Of these he notes (1) the treatment of the four cities named in l. 46 by Philip the Fair, who in 1297 had attacked Guy, Count of Flanders, then in alliance with Edward I of England, who, under a treaty with Charles of Valois, came with his two sons to Paris and was thrown into prison. This was followed by measures of extortion and cruelty under which Bruges was the chief sufferer. The vengeance in the implied prophecy of l. 48 was found in the battle of Courtray, in which the French were defeated by the Flemish.

52 Dante follows the popular tradition, recorded also by Villani (iv. 4), and widely received both in France and Italy. As a matter of history, however, Hugh Capet was descended from a noble line of Counts of Paris and Dukes of France. Possibly the legend arose out of the fact that his father, or he himself, had been described as a butcher on account of the severity of his punishments.

53 The ancient kings are the last descendants of the Carolingian house, Louis IV (*d.* 954) and his son Lothaire (*d.* 986), and Louis V (*d.* 987). On his death, Charles, a brother of Lothaire, was the only survivor and he was imprisoned by Hugh Capet, who thus came to the throne of France. The "grey garments" seem to refer to an enforced seclusion in a cloister, but of this there is no record in history, and it is possible that Dante may have mixed up the closing years of the Merovingian dynasty with those of the Carolingian, just as he scarcely seems to have sufficiently distinguished Hugh Capet the father from his son of the same name.

61 Dante passes over the long intermediate period, with which he was, perhaps, but imperfectly acquainted, to the events of contemporary history. The dowry of Provence refers to the accessions of territory gained by France in the marriages of Louis IX with Margaret, the eldest daughter of Raymond Berenger, Count of Provence, and of Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis, with Beatrice, a younger daughter, who was her father's heiress. These marriages are again referred to in *Par.* vi. 133-138. In the increased wealth and power which they brought to the royal house of France, Dante saw the *sons et origo* of the miseries of Italy, and of the failure of the Empire, which was, for him, the ideal polity.

Then they, with force and fraud, their plunder-game  
 Began, and later took, as 'for amends,' 63  
 Ponthieu, and lands of Norman, Gascon name.  
 Charles to Italia came, as 'for amends,'  
 And slew Conradin, and to heavenly throne  
 Sent off St Thomas, still as 'for amends,'  
 A time I see, ere many years are gone, 70  
 Which yet another Charles draws out of France,  
 To make himself and his both better known.  
 He with no arms goes forth, but that same lance  
 That Judas fought his joust with, and that so  
 He thrusts, it smites fair Florence in her paunch 75  
 Thence he no lands, but sin and shame and woe  
 Shall gain, which all the more on him shall press  
 The more that loss to him as nought shall show.  
 Another from his ship, in sore distress,  
 Taken, I see, his daughter sell, and deal 80  
 As corsairs do with slaves that they possess.

<sup>63</sup> The force of the thrice-repeated rhyme "for amends" lies in the thought that in every case where men might have looked for some token of shame and contrition, the only "fruits of repentance" were seen in the commission of some fresh outrage.

<sup>66</sup> The provinces named had belonged to England. Normandy had been taken from John (1202), Gascony, Guienne, and Ponthieu had been formally ceded by Edward I. to Philip the Fair, with a secret understanding, afterwards repudiated, that it was to be fornaul only (1295). Guienne was recovered in 1298.

<sup>68</sup> We note the poet's sympathy with the fate of the boy-prince (he was but sixteen when he died), who was the last scion of the great house of Hohenstaufen. He had come from Germany to avert his claims, as heir of Conrad IV., to Naples and Sicily, was opposed by Charles of Anjou, defeated at Tagliacozzo (*Il* xxviii 17), and put to death as it was believed, by the counsel of Pope Clement IV. in 1268, in cold blood, with a show of judicial formality.

<sup>69</sup> The story, here taken for granted, that Thomas Aquinas was poisoned by Charles of Anjou (1274), has fallen into such discredit that it is not even mentioned in the current biographies of the great Dominican Doctor. In Dante's time, however, it was currently believed throughout Italy, and is mentioned in *Vill* ix 218, and by all the early commentators. Thomas had lived for some years at Naples, and the King had treated him with great outpouring of honour. He was summoned by Gregory X. to a Council at Lyons, and was asked by the King on his departure what he was going to report to the Pope about him. The answer was, "I shall tell the truth." This alarmed the King, and he commissioned a physician, who was sent ostensibly to watch over the Saint's health, to get him out of the way. He died on his journey at the Cistercian monastery of Fossanova near Terracina, at the age of forty-seven. For further references to Aquinas, see *Par* x 98. It may be noted, however, that Charles of Anjou is placed, not in Hell, but in Purgatory, in the Valley of the Kings (*C* vii 113). Was this due to Dante's memory of his friendship with Charles Martel? (*Par* viii 49). There was a record, however, of words of contrition and faith spoken on his death bed (*Vill* vii 95).

<sup>70</sup> The "other" is Charles of Valois, whose intervention in the affairs of Florence, which Dante had opposed, led to his banishment and that of the other Bianchi. He was brother of Philip the Fair. He was invited to settle the disorders of Florence by Boniface VIII. as pacificator, was guilty there of many acts of treachery (the "spear of Judas"), and, after an unsuccessful enterprise in Sicily, returned to France in 1302. Like our own John, he was known as "Lackland," his policy bringing with it no accession of territory. His son, as Philip VI., began the succession of the house of Valois on the throne of France. Line 72 implies that he had disclosed the evil nature of his house even more than Charles of Anjou. The bold figure of 175 points to what one may call the "evisceration" of Florence by the expulsion of its best citizens and the spoiling of their goods.

<sup>80</sup> The "other," in this case, is Charles II. of Naples, son of Charles of Anjou. In 1284 he

O Avarice ! what worse ill can we feel,  
 Since thou my lineage to thyself draw'st so,  
 That they their heart against their own flesh set ! ?

But to eclipse past ill and future woe,

85

I in Alagna see the *fleur de-lys*,  
 Christ, in His Vicar, captive to the foe.

Ill once again as mocked and scorned I see,

I see once more the vinegar and gall,  
 And slain between new robbers hangeth he .

90

I see the Pilate new in such rage fall,

This sates him not, but, all law put aside,  
 With pirate sails he sacks the Templars' hall.

When, O my Lord, shall I be satisfied,

With looking on the secret vengeance stored,  
 Which Thou, Thy wrath assuaging, still dost hide ?

That which I said of her, the spouse adored,

Of the Eternal Spirit, and which made  
 Me turn to Thee for some explaining word,

was taken prisoner at sea by Ruggieri di Lauria admiral of Peter king of Arragon and although his father died in 1285 was not released to take his place as king of Naples till 1288. He gave his daughter Beatrice in marriage to Arrigo Marquis of Este (Hugh Capet's w. rds. being a prophecy *ex eventu*). It was believed that he had done so for the sake of money, 30,000 or 100,000 florins. Arrigo being much older than Beatrice and of evil repute (For full notices of Charles II. see *Lit.* vi 106 xix 127). To Dante this seemed a last as the slave trade in girls carried on by the Saracen corsairs who infested the Mediterranean.

<sup>86</sup> The fleur de lys (known popularly as a lily but in form more like u i b) first figured in the armorial bearings of the kings of France (thence on a field *azure*) under Lewis VII (1137-1180) but a legend connected it with the conversion of Clovis (Folkard *Plant. Lat.*, p. 387).

<sup>87</sup> Dante's all horror of the iniquities of the French princes is stronger even than his antipathy to Boniface VIII (comp. *H.* xix 53 *Esse* xxxii 149 *Esse* xix 132 *et al.*) to him the treatment of that Pontiff by the emissaries of Philip the Fair (see *Milm. L. C.* v 145 150) was an outrage on one who was officially whatever his character might be the vicar of Christ. The mockery and scorn the wormwood and the gall, of the crucifixion were reproduced by this new Pilate when he gave Boniface into the hands of his enemies of the house of Colonna.

<sup>88</sup> The sentence of condemnation fallen on Philip the Fair for the other great crime which was written in the records of his reign, the suppression of the Order of Templars on monstrous, and often incredible charges of heresy, idolatry and impurity. Their estates were confiscated, their Grand Master was burnt at the stake (1314). Philip extorted from Pope Clement V practically appointed by him and holding his court at Avignon a reluctant consent. But Dante notes in the whole transaction the absence of a fair trial and therefore of a true decree of righteous judgment and traces it not to the righteous zeal of the French king, but to his insatiable covetousness. The earlier commentators, it may be noted, refer the lines only to Philip's attacks on Church property in general (*Milm. L. C.* vi 181-276 Wilcke, *Templ. Orden*). For Dante's later action against Philip, see *Life* c. 7.

<sup>89</sup> It is this also a prophecy *ex eventu* alluding to the disgrace and disasters which in the judgment of historians (*Lit.* viii 92) came on Philip and his sons as a retribution for the crimes here specified. The longing of the soul to behold that retribution finds its justification in the words of Ps. lvi, and, if more were wanted, in the teaching of Aquinas (*Summ.* iii *Suppl.* 94, 3). Line 96 implies the thought that there is a calmness even in the wrath of God because He foresees the working out of His own righteous vengeance.

<sup>90</sup> See l. 19. The bride of the Holy Ghost is, of course, the Blessed Virgin Mother. To contemplate the pattern instances of holiness is the occupation of the days of Purgatory. Night is given to dwelling on the fruitfulness of the sins which are the opposites of that holiness. So here we have (1) Pygmalion, of whom Dante read in *Æt.* i 340-352 as having murdered



This hath been ordered, by us to be prayed, 100  
 Long as day lasts, but when the night comes on,  
 Far other sounds are from our lips conveyed.  
 At that time tell we of Pygmalion,  
 Whom eager will, o'er-gluttonous of gold,  
 Made traitor, robber, parricide in one 105  
 And then the wretched doom of Midas old,  
 Following his fond desire yet more to take,  
 A laughing-stock for all men to behold,  
 Of foolish Achan next we mention make,  
 How he the plunder stole, and so the blame 110  
 Of Joshua's wrath still seems on him to break  
 Sapphira and her husband then we name,  
 We praise the hoof-beats Heliodorus bore,  
 And all the mount is circled with the shame  
 (Of Polymnestor who slew Polydore, 115  
 And last of all we cry, 'O Crassus, say,  
 For now thou know'st, how tastes the molten ore'  
 Now high, now low, our mingling voices play,  
 As we are spurred by impulse strong in speech,  
 Now quicker pace, now tardier to display 120  
 But in the good which here by day we teach  
 I was not all alone, yet no one near,  
 Upraised his voice a listener's ear to reach"  
 We had moved onward, and had left him there,  
 And struggled with much effort to make way, 125  
 As far as granted power might onward bear,  
 When I perceived, like something that gives way,  
 The mountain shake, and felt a chill from thence  
 Such as he feels who sees death near to slay.

Sichæus, king of Içre, and driven his sister Dido into exile for the sake of gold. (2) Midas, who, in his folly, wished that all that he touched might be turned to gold (*V. l. f.* xi. 85-145), (3) Achan, who stole part of the spoil of Jericho (*Josh.* vii. 1-24), (4) Ananias and Sapphira (*Acts* v. 1-11), (5) Heliodorus, who sought to plunder the treasury of the Temple at Jerusalem, and was trampled under foot by heavenly horses (*2 Macc.* iii. 7-35), (6) Polymnestor, the murderer of Polydorus, son of Priam (*I. J. n.* iii. 29-68, *Met.* xiii. 429-438, *Il.* xxv. 18), (7) Crassus, the Roman type ofavarice and wealth, who was defeated by the Parthians (*ll. c.* 39). Their king, it is said (we are reminded of the story of Cyrus in *Herod.* i. 274, cast his head into a vessel of molten gold with the words "*Λύσιν τι σίσι, αὐρὸν βίβει*" (*J. R. Parker.* ii. 82).

118 The words throw us back on Dante's question in *ll.* 35-36. He had thought that Hugh Capet was alone in singing the praises of the Virgin and of Eribrius. He learns that others also had joined in those praises, but that his voice alone was audible. The thought implied is, that he was more ardent in proportion as he was nearer to the end.

127 The explanation of the trembling and of the cry of l. 136 is found in C. xxi. 70. A soul

Not Delos quivered with such violence, 130  
 Ere yet Latona chose it for a nest  
 To bear the twin eyes of Heaven's vault immensc.  
 Then voices on all sides mine ears arrest,  
 Such that my Master turns himself to me,  
 Saying, "While I guide thee, be not doubt-oppress" 131  
 Then "*Gloria in Excelsis Deo*" we  
 Heard them all say, gathering with mind intent  
 From those most near us what the words might be,  
 There we remained unmoved, on listening bent,  
 As did the shepherds who first heard that song, 132  
 Till it was done, and all vibrating spent.  
 Then on our holy road we moved along,  
 And watched the souls that on the earth thick lay,  
 Already turned to wail of custom long.  
 And never did my ignorance so sway, 133  
 In conflict strong, my soul with thirst to know,  
 If here my memory leads me not astray,  
 As then it seemed, while I in thought did go,  
 Nor dared I in my haste interrogate,  
 Nor could I, of myself, the true cause show 134  
 So went I full of thought, disconsolate. 135

## CANTO XXI.

### *The Joy of the Tremulous Mountain—The Poet Statius*

THE natural thirst which nought can satisfy  
 Save the pure fount from which Samaria's child  
 Of old entreated bountiful supply

had completed its work of penance and purification, and the mountain thrilled with joy and the souls of all who have been sharers in the discipline burst out into a *Gloria in excelsis*. In the Roman ritual the hymn was used at Matins, and so we have another correspondence like those already noticed in C. viii 13, xix 73. It was also a morning hymn in the earlier Church (*D C A s v*)

<sup>130</sup> For the earthquakes of Delos see *Herod* vi 98, *Thuc* ii 8. Dante seems to mix them up with the floating movement of the island as described in *Æn.* iii 69, *Met* vi 189-191. The "eyes of heaven" is from Ovid (*Met* iv 228).

<sup>134</sup> For a moment the souls had interrupted their penance to join in the chorus of praise, but they had to return to their wonted lamentation. That work must not be neglected for the sake of any emotion, however joyful and angelic. As yet, as l. 145 shows, the trembling of the mountain remained a mystery to the pilgrim.

<sup>1</sup> The words combine the dictum of Aristotle (*Met* i. 1, quoted in *Comm.* i. 1) as to man's

Wrought on me, urging eager steps and wild,  
 In that encumbered path beside my Guide ; 5  
 And me to pity that just doom beguiled.  
 And lo ! as Luke the record hath supplied  
 That Christ to two appeared in the way,  
 When He had left the grave-vault yawning wide,  
 So now behind a shadow seemed to stray, 10  
 Down gazing on the crowd that lay below,  
 Nor were we 'ware of him till he did say  
 " My brothers, God's peace guide you as ye go !"  
 Then suddenly we turned, and Virgil gave  
 The answering token we to such words owe ; 15  
 Then spake : " Amid the host whom God doth save  
 May that true Judge's Court in peace ther place,  
 Who me into eternal exile drive !"  
 " How ! " said he, while we went with quicker pace,  
 " If ye are shades whom God doth not yet deign 20  
 To help, who guides you on these stairs of Grace ?"  
 And then my Teacher . " If the marks full plain  
 Thou note the Angel did on this man lay,  
 Thou'lt see he needs must with the righteous reign.  
 But since that she who spinnoth night and day 25  
 Hath not as yet drawn all the distaff's thread,  
 Which Clotho gives to each, and winds away,

natural thirst for knowledge with the words which imply that that thirst is unsatisfied save by the teaching of the Son of Man (*Luke* i 8, *John* ix 35). Here again we have an echo from (*ouv* i 1)

<sup>6</sup> The "righteous vengeance" is the punishment of the souls described in the preceding Canto

<sup>7</sup> Comp. *Luke* xlii 13-16

<sup>13</sup> The speaker is the poet Statius, whom Dante held next to Virgil (comp. note on l 21)

<sup>16</sup> Statius takes both the pilgrims for souls on their way to Paradise, and salutes them with the scriptural greeting of *Matt* x 12, *John* xxi 19, 21. We note, not without wonder, that Dante could bear the thought of the "eternal exile" for his guide, the calm, I had almost said the heavenly, resignation of Virgil's answer

<sup>18</sup> A new wonder rises. If both the visitants are, as Statius supposes, not on their way to Paradise, how have they come so far? A r l gives "*per hē andate forte*," but it reads like a conjectural emendation.

<sup>22</sup> The marks are the remaining P's which the angel (C ix 112) had traced on Dante's brow

<sup>25</sup> Lachesis was the one of the three Fates, who, with her shears, drew the thread of life which was spun by Clotho, and cut at the hour of death by Atropos (*Il* xxxiii. 126).

His soul, to thine and mine as sister bred,  
 Mounting thus upward, could not come alone,  
 Because it sees not, as we see, to tread 30  
 Hence I from out hell's wide-oped jaws have flown  
 To guide him on, and I his feet will guide,  
 As far as lore of mine the power may own.  
 But tell me, if thou know'st, why all the side  
 O' the mountain shook, and why the spirits here, 35  
 All, to its sea-washed feet, with one voice cried ?"  
 Thus asking, he so hit the centre clear  
 Of my desire, that, with the hope alone,  
 My thirst was felt at once as loss severe.  
 Then he began : " No creature here hath known, 40  
 Without occasion fit, the holy awe  
 Of this our mount, or has its use outgrown.  
 Free are we here from chance and change's law,  
 When one received by Heaven to Heaven doth go,  
 This, and nought else, as cause, effect may draw 45  
 Since neither showers of rain, nor hail nor snow,  
 Nor dew nor hoar-frost falleth here, above  
 That first short staircase of three steps below.  
 Nor see we clouds, or dense or rarer, move,  
 Nor flashing light, nor child of Thaumas fair, 50  
 Who oft on earth with changing home doth rove,  
 Nor vapour arid mounts above the stair,  
 The topmost of the three of which I spake,  
 The Vicar of St Peter standeth there.

<sup>28</sup> Is the sisterhood that of a common humanity, or of the special gift which was the common inheritance of the three poets ? The latter view seems the more probable (comp II iv 102)

<sup>30</sup> The words embody Dante's favourite thought (*Mon* iii 16, *Conv* iv 2), that no man can attain to true blessedness without the guidance, first of earthly, and then of heavenly wisdom. The form which the thought takes here is probably an echo of 1 *Cor* xiii 12. Virgil, as in l 33, is conscious of the limitations of his own guidance.

<sup>34</sup> Virgil, it will be remembered, had been through Hell before (II ix 25), but Purgatory and its laws were for him an untravelled region

<sup>41</sup> The phrase " religion of the mountain " is an echo of the "*religio di a loci*" of *Æn.* viii 349, and this has guided me in my rendering of it. The order, which was sacred, was liable to no changes from physical causes. When once the threshold of the three steps had been passed, the laws that governed it were altogether spiritual

<sup>50</sup> The daughter of Thaumas is Iris, the rainbow (Hesiod *Theog* 265, *Æn* iv 694, *Met* i 270, xi 585). Lane 51 points to the changing aspect of every rainbow according to the position of the sun and the spectator

<sup>54</sup> The " vicar of St Peter " is the angel gate keeper of C. ix 127. For this, as the boundary of vapours from the sea, comp C xxviii 97-102

Below us more or less the earth may quake ; 55  
     But, from the wind within the earth concealed,  
     I know not how, it never here did shake.  
 It trembles here, when guilty soul is healed,  
     So that it soars aloft, or up doth rise  
     Higher to climb, and that cry help doth yield 60  
 (Of purity the will full proof supplies,  
     Which, wholly free to change its wonted spot,  
     Seizes the soul, and so helps that it flies.  
 First it wills good , but impulse suffers not,  
     Which with like will God's justice setteth fast, 65  
     As once to sin, so now to torment's lot.  
 And I o'er whom five hundred years have passed,  
     Placed in this torment, felt but now within  
     Free will to seek a better seat at last.  
 Therefore thou hearest just now the earthquake's din, 70  
     And the blest spirits through the Mount give praise  
     To their high Lord, that soon their way they win "  
 So spake he, and as that which thirst allays  
     Gives pleasure to the thirst proportionate,  
     I fail to tell what joy his words did raise. 75  
 And my wise Leader " Now I see the net  
     That holds you here, and how ye thence depart,  
     Why the earth quakes and ye conjugulate.  
 Now let me know, I pray thee, who thou art,  
     And why thus stretched so many centuries 80  
     Thou did'st lie here, to me, I pray, impart "  
 " When Titus good and wise, in days of old,  
     With help of Heaven's high king avenged the wounds  
     Whence flowed the blood by guilty Judas sold,

<sup>60</sup> The " cry " is the *Gloria in excelsis* of C. xx. 136. It is raised when the will of the soul to rise upward is free from all impediments arising out of its own past impurities or the laws of retribution. Till then the will, which had been turned to sin, is turned to the working out of its appointed sentence, which becomes the object of a new desire. Dante, in this subtle distinction between the will that seeks freedom and that which accepts punishment as the condition of freedom, does but paraphrase the teaching of Aquinas (*Summa P.* iii, *Suppl.* lxxxv. 2, 3).

<sup>66</sup> Statius died *circa* A.D. 96. Of the other 704 years, 400 must, in Dante's thoughts, have been spent in the circle of the sluggish souls (C. xxiii. 92), the others in the *Ante-Purgatorium* or the circles in which other sins were expiated.

<sup>61</sup> Statius enters on the narrative of his life. Dates of birth and death are fixed conjecturally at *circa* A.D. 50, and, as above, A.D. 96. His two great works, the *Thebaid* and *Achil. Iiad*, placed him in high repute as a poet (*Juv.* vii. 821). In Dante's thoughts, scarcely in harmony with those of later critics, he stood next to Virgil.

With name whence praise lasts longest, most redounds, 85  
 I lived in yonder world," the soul replied  
 "Fame had I much, but knew not true faith's grounds  
 My soul of song flowed on in such sweet tide  
 That, though Tolosa-born, me great Rome claimed,  
 Where I my wreaths of myrtle wore with pride 90  
 As Statius yet in yonder world I'm famed,  
 I sang of Thebes and of Achilles great,  
 But fell with that my burden second-named.  
 Seeds for my glowing fire did scintillate,  
 Kindling my soul, from that divinest light, 95  
 Which many thousands doth illuminate.  
 Of the *Æneid* speak I, which was quite  
 My foster nurse, my mother-poesy;  
 Without it, not a dram had I of night.  
 And to have lived in yonder world, when I 100  
 With Virgil might have lived, I would have borne  
 A year yet more ere I from exile fly."  
 These words made Virgil then towards me turn  
 With looks which in their stillness said "Be still,"  
 Yet sometimes even will must failure learn, 105  
 For tears and laughter so their course fulfil,  
 Following the passions whence each takes its rise,  
 That least in truest souls they follow will.  
 I did but smile, as one who winks his eyes,  
 Then silent was the shade, and gazed on me 110  
 Full in those orbs where most fixed image lies,

<sup>81</sup> The "enduring name" is that of "poet."

<sup>82</sup> There is no historical ground for the statement that Statius was born at Toulouse. His own words, indeed, point to Naples as his birthplace. Possibly Dante confused him with the rhetorician Iuvius Statius, who was of the former city. Ozan (*Purg.* p. 351), however, reports that the University of Toulouse, founded in 1215, looked to him as its great master, as Virgil was of the University of Naples. The *Sylva*, it may be noted, were not known in Dante's time.

<sup>90</sup> The *Achilleid* was left unfinished when Statius died.

<sup>97</sup> The *Ihebaid* does not supply any direct evidence of the ardent admiration here expressed, but the form and structure of the poem, and its division into the same number of books as the *Æneid*, is perhaps sufficient evidence that Statius took Virgil as his model. The feeling expressed, the readiness to bear one year more of purgatorial pain, if only he might have seen and known Virgil after the flesh, may well be taken by us as Dante's own.

<sup>102-130</sup> The hyplay that follows is sketched with an exquisite subtlety. Virgil by his looks enjoins silence. Dante smiles at the thought that Statius is on the point of gaining his wish without the price which he was ready to pay for it. Statius, seeing the lighting of that smile, presses for an explanation. Dante stands as in a strait between the two poets.

And said, "As thou dost hope the end to see  
 Of thy great task, why saw I in thy face  
 But now the lightning of a smile of glee?"  
 Thus am I on each side in evil case ; 115  
 One bids me hold my peace, the other speak ;  
 Therefore I sigh, and both my meaning trace  
 "Speak," said my Master, "fear thou not to break  
 Thy silence, but speak out, and to him tell  
 What he with such anxiety doth seek." 120  
 Thou I : "Perchance some wonder on thee fell,  
 O ancient spirit, from that smile of mine.  
 But I would have thee feel more wondrous spell  
 Lo, he who guides mine eyes to height divine,  
 He is that Virgil from whom thou didst gain 125  
 The strength to sing of Gods and heroes' line.  
 By other cause that smile would'st thou explain,  
 Count it not true ; in this the true cause greet,  
 E'en in the words thou spok'st of him so plain."  
 Already was he bowed to clasp the feet 130  
 Of my wise Guido, but he, "O Brother," spake,  
 "Not so, for thou, a shade, a shade dost meet."  
 And he uprising, said, "Now thou canst take  
 The measure of the love which burns in me,  
 When shadowy forms for cold I mistake, 135  
 And quite forget that vanity are we"

### CANTO XXII.

*The Angel of the Sixth Circle—Statius and the Story of his Consecration—  
 Sins of Appetite.*

BEHIND us was the Angel staying now,  
 The Angel who to that sixth round had led,  
 And blotted out one mark from off my brow,

<sup>120</sup> Statius, as in C. xxii 66, had another ground of reverence beside his admiration of him as a poet.

<sup>122</sup> Had Dante forgotten that he had made Sordello and Virgil embrace each other (C. vii 15), or was the soul of Statius, now that he was moving upward, clothed with a more subtle corporeity than that of the Lombard poet?

<sup>1</sup> The Angel of Justice stands at the passage between the fifth circle and the sixth, and, as elsewhere, cancels another of the Poets on the poet's brow

And "Those who thirst for righteousness" had said,  
 "Beat<sup>4</sup> are they," and to this his song 5  
 Joined *situnt*, and nought else was uttered.  
 And I with lighter footstep sped along  
 Than through the other passes, so that I  
 Those swift souls followed, without toil, and strong  
 When Virgil thus began, "Love kindled by 10  
 True virtue asketh other love to burn,  
 Provided that its flame shines outwardly.  
 So from the hour when down to us did turn,  
 In *limbus* dark of Hades, Juvenal,  
 And I from him of thy esteem did learn, 15  
 My hearty good-will did upon thee fall  
 As fully as on any yet unknown,  
 So that these stairs I now full short may call  
 But tell,—and as to friend be pardon shown,  
 If too much freedom loose perchance the rein, 20  
 And, as a friend, hold thoughts communion,—  
 How could it be that eager greed of gain  
 Should find a place within thy breast so wise,  
 With wisdom thou with much care didst attain ?"  
 At first those words in Statius bade arise 25  
 Somewhat of laughter, and then answered he  
 "Each word of thine dear proof of love supplies.  
 Truly full often many things thou'lt see  
 Which unto doubt false matter minister,  
 Because of causes true that from us flee ' 30  
 Thy question doth thy full belief avei  
 That I in yonder life loved gain too well,  
 Perchance from that round where thou found'st me here

<sup>4</sup> The thirst for righteousness stands in contrast with the thirst for gold, and the promise attached to it is proclaimed, as before, in one of the Beatitudes.

<sup>5</sup> A. v. l. "*situnt*" for "*situnt*" has led to the conjecture that there may be an allusion to the "I thirst" of *John* xix. 28. *Situnt* is, however, probably the true reading.

<sup>7</sup> The greater ease of movement was (as in C. xii. 116) from the victory over another sin.

<sup>10</sup> Another presentation of the thought of *H. v.* 203, transferred from human love to the love of righteousness.

<sup>14</sup> Juvenal was contemporary with Statius, and, as has been seen (note on C. xxi. 81), had spoken of him in terms of warm praise.

<sup>19</sup> One notes the lowliness with which the master speaks to the scholar, because the scholar is on a higher spiritual level than his own. Virgil had heard from Hadrian (C. xix. 115) that the avaricious were undergoing the discipline of the fifth circle. He cannot understand how one so wise as Statius could have yielded to so base a vice. He hears as an explanation the ethical view already presented in *H. vii.*, that prodigality and avarice are but opposite forms of the same root-evil, the preference of the good things of earth to those of heaven, and that Statius took his place among those who had yielded to the former.



Now know that I from avarice did dwell  
 Much too remote, and 'twas for this excess 35  
 Thousands of months of suffering on me fell.  
 And but that I that evil did redress,  
 And hearkened to thee where thou didst exclaim,  
 As if man's nature wrought thee sore distress,  
 'O cursed thirst of gold, to what foul shamo 40  
 Dost thou not lead man's wandering appetite?'  
 I should play now the jousts' dismal game  
 Then I perceived our hands too widely might  
 Open in spending, learning how to mourn 45  
 For this as well as other deeds not right  
 How many shall rise up with locks all shorn,  
 Through ignorance, which of this very sin  
 Repentance bars in life or death-hour's bourn '  
 Know that the guilt which farthest place would win  
 From any given sin, that it may dry 50  
 Its verdure rank, must with it here begin.  
 Therefore though I am found in misery,  
 Purg'ing my guilt, with those o'er fond of gold,  
 It comes upon me through the contrary "  
 "Now when thou didst the fierce arms sing of old, 55  
 Of those who wrought Jocasta's double woe,"  
 Said he who sang the songs of shepherds' fold,

<sup>40</sup> The problem here is to explain how Dante could have seen in the famous words of *Æn.* iii. 56—

*"Quid non mortalia sctora iungis  
 Auri sacra fames,"*

a remedy for the sin of prodigality. It is complicated by the fact of a *v l p r l d* and a *ch* in l. 40. Two explanations have been given: (1) that Dante, deliberately or in ignorance, took *sacra* in the sense of 'holy.' "Why did not a righteous, duly measured love of gold control the desires of men?" or as Butl., the '*sacra fames*' = holy hunger of gold = holy poverty. (2) Keeping the true sense of *sacra*, "Why does not the accursed thirst for gold (seen in prodigality as well as in avarice) control the appetites of men in due measure, instead of out of measure?" (3) With the *v l* "to what evil, in contrasted forms, does not that accursed thirst lead the desires of men?" I incline to (3).

<sup>42</sup> Comp. the punishment of the avaricious and the prodigal in *II* vii. 25-30.

<sup>46</sup> The words point to the facts (1) that the prodigal is often ignorant that his life, as such, is sinful, (2) that that ignorance is not of the "invincible" kind that can be pleaded as an excuse for sin. The prodigal might know, ought to know, that his life is at variance with the Divine law (*iquin. Summ.* I. 2, 76. 2).

<sup>47</sup> The image is that of rank growing plants, rich with excess of moisture, which need to be dried up. An echo of *Æn.* xx. 47 may have been floating in the poet's ears, suggesting the thought that the "green tree" was a fit parable of the prodigal. There is absolutely no authority for ascribing this character to Statius, and, so far as we know, Dante must have framed for him what has been called an 'ideal biography.'

<sup>48</sup> The twofold sorrow of Jocasta is found in the contentions of her sons Eteocles and Polyneus, as set forth in the *Œdipad*.

<sup>49</sup> The description of Virgil indicates that it was not the *Æneid* only that Dante loved. The Eclogues and Bucolics were also the objects of his admiration, and, as in his poetical correspondence with Joanne de Virgilio, their form was reproduced by him.

"By that which Clio there to thee doth show,  
 'Twould seem thou wert not with the true faith crowned,  
 In lack of which good deeds no help bestow. 60  
 If this be so, what sun or torch shed round  
 Its rays upon thy dark, that thou couldst steer  
 Thy bark upon the track the Fisher found?"  
 And he to him "Thou first my steps didst bear  
 Towards Parnassus, in its grotts to drink, 65  
 And then the way to God for me mad'st clear  
 Thou didst as one who walks by night with link  
 Behind him, and no help therefrom doth gain,  
 But those who follow maketh wise to think,  
 When thou didst say, 'The age begins again, 70  
 Justice returns and primal state of man,  
 And a new heaven-born offspring comes to reign'  
 Bard was I through thee, through thee Christian,  
 But that thou better see what I design,  
 I'll stretch my hand with tints to fill my plan 75  
 Already teemed the world with Creed divine,  
 Through all its wide extent as broadcast sown,  
 By those who bore the eternal Kingdom's sign,  
 And those thy words that now I touched upon  
 Did with those preachers new so well agree, 80  
 That with them oft I held communion.

<sup>58</sup> Clio as the Muse of History is recognised as having inspired Statius (*Jhel* i 41). The poem, Virgil implies, shows no trace of Christian faith. How was it, by what natural or supernatural light, that the truth had been revealed to Statius?

<sup>61</sup> The fisherman is, of course, St Peter. The image had become familiar through the *Sigillum Piscatoris* used by the Roman Pontiffs, on which Christ was represented as fishing with a line. St Peter with a net (*Marci* v *Pecheur*). The first mention of the seal occurs in a letter of Clement IV in 1265, which he describes as being used by the Popes, '*in secretis*' (Waterson, *Archæol* xi 13).

<sup>67</sup> The simile comes from the common practice of a master walking in the streets at night, his servant going before him and holding a torch or lantern behind his back.

<sup>70</sup> The words are a literal translation of Virg. *Fæl* iv 5-7. Dante follows the patristic interpretation which, beginning with Lactantius (*Inst. Const* iv 32), Lactantius (*Div. Inst.* viii 24), and Augustine (*Crit. Doct.* x 27), who saw in Virgil a conscious prophet of the Christ, was reproduced, in spite of St Jerome's protest (*Epist.* 53 *ad Paul.* c. 7) by most medieval interpreters, and represented as having converted persecutors into martyrs (*Act. Sancti Aug.* ii 407). Instances which may have had a special influence on Dante's mind are found in his citation by Donatus, Bishop of Fiesole (*Oran. Docum. Ined.* p. 55) and by Innocent III (*Serm.* ii *in fest. Nat. Opp.* p. 86). On the assumption that Statius was thus converted, Dante is again playing the part of the writer of an 'ideal biography'. He pictures what ought to have been the effect on the poet's mind of the Virgilian prophecy, and of its fulfilment in the lives of the preachers of the new faith. Such a man *must* have wept over the sufferers of Domitian's persecution. Dante assumes that he was baptised before he wrote the *Thebaid*, but remained a crypto Christian, and had to expiate his cowardice by four hundred years in the circle of the *accidiosi* (C. xvii. and xviii).

So holy then they came to seem to me,  
 That, when Domitian's persecution fell,  
 Not without tears of mine their grief flowed free.  
 And when on earth I lived out life's brief spell, 85  
 I helped them, and their righteous customs made  
 All other sects to me contemptible.  
 And ere in song I bade the Greeks invade  
 The streams of Thebes, I also was baptized,  
 But lived a secret Christian, being afraid, 90  
 And long with pagan worship compromised ;  
 And this lukewarmness full four hundred year  
 Kept me in path in that fourth round comprised  
 (Of thee, who mad'st the veil to disappear  
 Which hid from me that good of which I speak, 95  
 While a long climb remains before us here,  
 Where dear old Terence is I fain would seek,  
 Cæcilius, Plautus, Varro, if thou know,  
 Say, are all damned, and in what region bleak ?"  
 "They, Persius, I, and many more enow," 100  
 Answered my Guide, "are with that Greek bard thrown  
 Who as the Muses' best loved child did grow,  
 In the dark starless prison's outmost zone.  
 Full often talk we of that Mountain high  
 Which claims our nursing-mothers as its own. 105  
 Furipides and Antiphon are nigh  
 To us, with Agatho, Simonides,  
 And other Greeks, brow-wreathed for poesy.

<sup>87</sup> With a feeling which we may assume was Dante's own, Statius inquires after the fate of the writers he had most honoured—Terence, the writer of comedies (the readings vary, *antica* and *amico*, *d. n. c.* 150), Cæcilius, also a dramatic poet (*d. n. c.* 168), Plautus (*d. n. c.* 184). There were two Virgils, more or less famous as poets, one of Rieti (*d. n. c.* 27), of whom Cicero (*Brut.* xv. 60) and Augustine (*C. i. Det.* vi. 2) speak in terms of high praise, and the other of Narbonne, who wrote an epic on the Argonautic expedition. Dante probably refers to the former.

<sup>100</sup> The wider hope, as far as Dante dared to hold it (*Il. iv.* 40-42, *P. ar.* xiv. 70-77, *xx.* 94-132), finds utterance in the words that follow. The writers named—and Persius also, the young Sicilian poet who died at the age of twenty-eight in the purity of a white-souled manhood—and others more than could be named, were not damned as men commonly counted damnation, but were in the calm fields and by fair waters, and holding high converse with each other, excluded only from the hope of fuller knowledge and of a clearer vision. The "Greek" of l. 105 is, of course, Homer.

<sup>106</sup> The list expands. We miss the names of Æschylus and Sophocles, but it includes Euripides, Antiphon, also a writer of tragedies (A. v. l. "Anacreonte" has little to commend it), Simonides (*d. n. c.* 559), as representing lyric poetry, Agathon, tragedian (*d. n. c.* 401).

There of thy race, in company with these,  
 Antigone, Deiphile, are met; 110  
 Ismena, sad as ever, Argia sees.  
 There she who showed Langia's rivulet,  
 There Thotie and Tiresias' daughter, there  
 Deidamia with her sisters set."  
 The poets both already silent were, 115  
 Eager once more to cast their glance each way,  
 Freed from their climbing up that close-walled stair  
 Already now four handmaids of the day  
 Were left behind, the fifth one at the yoke  
 Was pointing upward still the fiery ray. 120  
 "I deem we now should turn," my Guide then spoke,  
 "Our right arm's shoulder to the outer side,  
 Circling, as we are wont, around the rock."  
 Thus there our former custom was our guide;  
 And we with less misgiving took our way, 125  
 Because that true soul us accompanied.  
 They went before, and I behind did stay  
 Alone, and listened to their converse high,  
 Which gave me skill the poet's lyre to play.  
 But soon then sweet discourse was broken by 130  
 A tree which midway in the path we found,  
 With fruits that sweetly smelt and pleasantly

<sup>109</sup> It is perhaps in some measure a self-revelation that Dante represents Virgil as thinking Statius likely to be interested in the fate of the men and women of whom he had written in his poem. He knew, by his own experience, how the creations of the poet's mind became living persons to him. In *Antigone* we have the daughter of Oedipus, of whose devotion to father and brother Sophocles wrote. Deiphile, wife of Polyneus, one of the 'Seven against Thebes,' Argia, her sister and wife of Polyneus, Ismene, with all the sorrow but not the courage of her sister Antigone, Hypermestra (see C. xxvi 94, *H* xviii 93 for other facts in her history), who led the Seven, when they were at their last, to the fountain of Langia in Boeotia. Manto, the daughter of Tiresias, appears in *H* xx 52 as in the fourth *Boisgia*. Had Dante forgotten this? or does he assume that Tiresias had more than one daughter, or does the "there" of l. 109 take a wider range than that of the first circle of Hell?

<sup>110</sup> Thetis, the wife of Peleus and mother of Achilles, named probably is one of the persons in Statius' other poem, the *Achilles*. Deidamia daughter of Iphionides and beloved by Achilles, named for the same reason. Comp. C. ix 34-39, *H* v 65, xxvi 62.

<sup>118</sup> The 'handmaids of the day' are the hours (C. xii 81), and the fact implied, starting from 6 A.M., is that it was between 7 and 11.

<sup>121</sup> The pilgrims, no longer asking their way, follow the rule of C. xix 81 and turn ever more to the right. Statius goes with them, holding sweet converse with Virgil on the secrets of their art.

<sup>122</sup> Two trees meet us in this circle, the other, appearing in C. xiv 107-117 is defined as a scion from the tree of knowledge. Is this also of the same nature? or is it an offshoot from the tree of life, or does it represent the intermediate element of joy, which is pure and innocent in themselves, but call for temperance and even abstinence in their use? The first seems the most probable hypothesis.

And as a fir-tree tapers from the ground,  
 From bough to bough, so that did upward spread;  
 I trow, that none might scale its topmost round. 136  
 And on the side which barred a closer tread,  
 Fell headlong from the rock a streamlet clear,  
 And over all the foliage green was shed.  
 And the two poets to the tree drew near,  
 And then a voice from out the leaves did cry - 140  
 "Great dearth for you of fruit that groweth here."  
 And then, "Much more cared Mary for supply  
 That so the marriage might have honour due,  
 Than for that mouth which pleads for you on high  
 And ancient Roman dames contentment knew, 145  
 Drinking of water clear; and Daniel  
 Held meats in scorn, and gathered wisdom true.  
 That primal age, which did as gold excel,  
 Seasoned its acorns with keen appetite,  
 And thirst to nectar turned each springing well 150  
 Locusts and honey were the viands light  
 That fed the Baptist in the desert waste,  
 Whence stands he clothed in majesty and might,  
 As in the Gospel ye may find him traced.

<sup>136</sup> The picture presented is that of a fir tree, with branches spreading wider as the tree rises, which men cannot climb. Beneath the symbol we learn the truth that men, in the discipline of penitence, must abstain even from blameless joys. They may see and smell the fruit, they may hear the trickling of the water on the leaves, but they may not taste of either.

<sup>141</sup> The voice coming from the tree, like an oracle from Dodona's oak, is probably to be thought of as uttered by its angel guardian.

<sup>142</sup> Examples of abstinence come after the manner of other circles. When Mary pointed out the want of wine at Cana it was not for herself, but for the honour of those who gave the wedding feast (*Cant* 29). The use of wine, according to old tradition, was unknown to the matrons of ancient Rome (*Sat Mar* 11 2). Daniel (*Dan* 1 2-20) was an example of rigorous abstinence in the midst of luxuries.

<sup>143</sup> The description of the golden age is taken from Dante's favourite authors, *Æn* viii 324, Ovid, *Met* 1 89-112, *Buth* 11 5. Comp *Purg* xxviii 139.

<sup>144</sup> Comp *Matt* iii 4, *Mark* 1 6. Dante accepts the "locusts" of the Gospel narrative in the natural meaning of the word. The fact that the Baptist was the patron saint of Florence gives a special force to his example.

## CANTO XXIII.

*The Discipline of Appetite—The Story of Forese Donati.*

WHILE I mine eyes upon the leafage green  
 Fixed, with such eager gaze as giveth one,  
 Whose life in catching birds hath wasted been,  
 My more than Father said to me "My son,  
 Come now, I pray, what time to us is lent,  
 We so should spend that better gain be won"  
 I turned my face, and instantly I went  
 Close to those Sages, who discoursed so well,  
 That little effort seemed in walking spent.  
 And lo! a wailing song upon us fell,  
 E'en "*Laba mea, Domine,*" in strain  
 That made our breasts with joy and sorrow swell  
 "O my sweet Father, what hear I again?"  
 So I began, and he "Those shades that go  
 Now loose, perchance, the knot of their debt's chain"  
 And e'en as eager pilgrims often do,  
 Who when they light midway on folk unknown,  
 Turn round to them, yet do not linger so,  
 Thus, behind us, a crowd came running on,  
 More swift than we, and on us fixed their gaze,  
 A crowd of souls, in silent prayer each one,  
 Each with dark dim cavernous eyes did gaze,  
 Pallid in face, and so exceeding thin,  
 Their body's surface every bone displays.

<sup>3</sup> The poet seems to look back upon the sports of his youth e.g., falconry of his delight in which we find so many traces in *Il xvii 127 xxii 131 et al.*, as so much wasted time

<sup>8</sup> Possibly a reminiscence of the saying of Publius Syrus, "*Comes facundus in via pro vehiculo est*"

<sup>11</sup> The words are from *Is. li 17* The great penitential psalm was a fit utterance for the repentant souls Here as elsewhere the quotation implies the whole context *Is. li* comes into the Roman service for Lauds on Tuesday, another instance of the correspondence already noticed See note on *C. xx 127*

<sup>16</sup> The pilgrims—I take the word in its narrower sense—are so absorbed in thinking of the goal of their journey that they take little heed of the passers by whom they chance to meet Possibly the words contain a reminiscence of the *Ev. N. c. 41* So it was with the souls that now meet the poet's eyes who had yielded to the sin of gluttony

<sup>22-27</sup> Possibly a reproduction of the description of hunger in *Met. viii 103-110*

I do not think that, when all worn to skin, 23  
     E'en Ersichthon showed as half so tanned  
     By his long fast, when fear was worst within.  
 I said, as I in thought their features scanned,  
     " These are the race that lost Jerusalem  
     When Mary took her son's flesh in her hand." 30  
 Seemed their eye-sockets like rings void of gem ·  
     Ho who in human face doth omo read,  
     Would here have recognised full clear the M  
 Who would have thought an apple's scent could breed—  
     Not knowing how—such keen and sharp desire, 33  
     Or that which from pure water doth proceed.  
 Still did I what had made them gaunt admire,  
     Seeking tho cause, not yet made manifest,  
     That with such skin and scales did them attire.  
 And lo ! from out his head's cavernous nest 40  
     A spirit turned his eyes and gazed on mo,  
     And then cried out, " With what graco am I blest ! "  
 Ne'er by his face should I have known 'twas he,  
     But in his voice was that to me revealed  
     Which in his face outworn I could not see. 46  
 That spark in me as with a flash unsealed  
     My knowledge of the features sorely marred  
     Forese's face I knew, no more concealed.  
 " Ah, look not thou at this dry scab and hard,"  
     So prayed he, " which my countenance doth stain, 50  
     Nor to this flesh so meagre and so scarred ,  
 But tell me true who thou art, who these twain,  
     Yonder, who here have thee accompanied ,  
     Delay not this in clear speech to explain " .

<sup>23</sup> Ersichthon, who had profaned the sacred grove of Ceres, was punished with an insatiable hunger, leading him at last to devour his own flesh (*Met.* viii 740-880)

<sup>30</sup> The story is told by Josephus (*H. art.* vi 3)

<sup>33</sup> The eyebrows formed the M, each eye an O. The full thought is worked out in a sermon by Berthold of Regensburg (*d.* 1170), whose writings Dante may have known, and who finds, bungling in ears and nose, nostrils and mouth, the complete formula of HOMO DEI. Here, we are told, the M was plain enough.

<sup>40</sup> The emaciated spectre turns out to be one whom Dante had known, Forese Donati, brother of his great foe, Corso (*C.* xxi 82), and of the Piccarda of *Par.* iii 47, and therefore connected with the poet by his marriage with Germa Donati. Line 78 shows that he died in A.D. 1293 or 1296. No contemporary writer names him, and when commentators describe him as addicted to gluttony, they are simply giving their inferences from what they find. The name Forese occurs in two sonnets ascribed to Dante as that of a prodigal, but they are rightly rejected by Witte and other critics (*Prov.* O. *ff.* 1 286). Dante seems to have loved him while he lived (l. 115), and to have lamented his death (l. 55).

"That face of thine, I wept for when it died,  
 Gives me no less cause now for sore despair,  
 Beholding it so altered," I replied.  
 "But say in God's name, what leaves thee so bare?  
 Nor bid me speak while wonder holds me still,  
 Ill can he speak who's filled with other care."  
 60  
 And he to me said, "From the Eternal Will  
 Falls virtue on the water and the tree  
 Behind us, hence for me this leanness ill.  
 This people all, that wail their misery  
 Through yielding to ungoverned appetite,  
 65  
 By thirst and hunger holier come to be.  
 To eat and drink the fragrance doth invite  
 Which issues from the fruit, and from the spray  
 That far and wide bedews the verdure bright  
 And not once only winding on our way  
 70  
 In this our round, our pain renewed we see  
 'Pain' said I 'consolation' I should say,  
 For that same will that loads us to the tree  
 Made Christ to utter *Ecce* joyously,  
 When with His blood He made our spirits free"  
 75  
 "Forese, from the day," to him said I,  
 "Thou left'st the world a better life to win,  
 Up to this time five years have not rolled by:  
 If thou had'st lost the power for further sin,  
 Ere on thee came the hour of that blest woe  
 80  
 Through which we wedlock new with God begin,  
 How hast thou mounted hither? Surely so  
 I should have thought to find thee where delay  
 By equal time repairs itself below."

<sup>63</sup> The water and the tree of C. xxii. 137-137 bring with them a power that wears away the fulness of flesh of the self indulgent, and that by the law of abstinence which now compels them to deny themselves even the simplest and purest joys. They endure a pain like that of Tantalus.

<sup>72</sup> The thought is eminently characteristic of mediæval faith. The pains of purgatory, however keen, are accepted as means to the desired end, and are therefore the soul's greatest solace. "Near to Paradise," said St. Catherine of Genoa, "there is more content in Purgatory than anywhere in the world" (*Fr. del Purg. c. ii*).

<sup>74</sup> The will of the suffering soul is so far from that of Christ in the darkest hour of His Passion, that He too of His own free will endured the cross that He might be "made perfect through suffering" (*Heb. ii. 10*).

<sup>79</sup> Dante, it would seem, knew, perhaps from personal companionship, that Forese had delayed his repentance till disease had deprived him of the power of sinning after the old fashion, and had therefore expected to find him in the circle of the *Ani. Purgatorium* with Belacqua and his fellows.



And he to me : " So quickly here to stay, 85  
     To drink the wormwood sweet of this my pain,  
     My Nella's hot tears sped me on my way.  
 With her deep sighs and prayer's devoutest strain  
     She drew me from the region where men wait,  
     And set me free from circles that detain. 90  
 So much more dear to God, more loved the state  
     Of that my widowed one I loved of yore,  
     As she in her good deeds is isolate ;  
 For yon Barbagia on Sardinia's shore 95  
     Can in her women boast more modesty  
     Than that Barbagia where my loss she bore.  
 O brother sweet, what more can I reply ?  
     A time to come already looms in sight  
     To which this hour shall not seem old, but nigh,  
 When preachers from the pulpit shall indict 100  
     The bold unblushing ladies Florentine,  
     Who walk with breasts and bosoms bared to light  
 What Saracens, or those of barbarous line  
     Ere stood in need, to make them covered go,  
     Of spiritual or other discipline ? 105  
 But if those shameless women could but know  
     What doom for them the heavens bring by and bye,  
     They with wide mouths e'en now would wail their woe  
 For if my foresight looketh not awry, 110  
     They will wax sad ere yet the boy has beard  
     Who now is hushed to sleep with lullaby.

<sup>87</sup> Nothing is known of Nella (short for Giovannella) beyond what is implied here, that she was pious and good, prayed often for her husband's soul, and presumably was still a widow when Dante wrote his *Purgatory*, probably *circa* A.D. 1314.

<sup>94</sup> Sardinia, it will be remembered, was subject to Pisa (*H* xxii 89, xxix 48). Evil tales were told of the mountain district of Barbagia. There women went about half naked, and were shamelessly licentious. Such a Barbagia, Dante says, speaking through Forese, had Florence become. The whole passage reminds one of *Isa* iii 16-24.

<sup>96</sup> This also may have been a prophecy, but, though sumptuary laws were passed in Florence to regulate women's dress in 1323 (*I ill* ix 245, x 11), the earliest notice of preaching of this kind brings us to the episcopate of Agnolo Acciaiuoli in 1351. One wonders whether it was quoted in the days of Savonarola. On the dress of the men and women of Florence, comp. *Par* xv 112-120.

<sup>106</sup> The "other discipline" implies fines or imprisonment, such as were actually imposed in 1323.

<sup>108</sup> The words include all the disasters that happened at Florence, say between 1300 and 1316, the oppression of Charles of Valois, the faction fights and banishments, the great fire of 1300, and the catastrophe of the Ponte alla Carraja in 1304, perhaps also the defeat of the Florentines at Monte Catini in 1315.

No longer, Brother, be thy name unheard,  
 See thou that not I only, but we all,  
 Gaze where through thee the sun hath veiled appeared "  
 Then I to him. " If thou wilt best recall 115  
 What thou to me wast, and what I to thee,  
 Still will that memory on thee grievous fall.  
 He from that former life of ours turned me,  
 Who goes before me ; but few days ago,  
 When full-orbed showed his sister whom we see " 120  
 (I pointed to the sun), " he led me on,  
 Through the deep night of those who die indeed,  
 With this true flesh which follows him alone.  
 My path from thence his help and comfort speed,  
 Climbing and winding round the mountain's side, 125  
 Which makes you straight whom the world bent with greed.  
 So far he saith that he will be my guide  
 Till I shall be where Beatrice dwells ;  
 There I must stay, by him unaccompanied.  
 Virgil this is, who thus his message tells," 130  
 Pointing to him, " the other is that shade,  
 For whom but now your realm through all its dells  
 Shook, when for him its full release it made "

## CANTO XXIV.

*The Sins of Appetite—Buonagunta of Lucca—The Secret of true  
 Poetry—The fiery Furnace.*

NOR motion made our speech, nor speech our tread  
 One whit more slow, but talking, on went we,  
 Like ships whose sails before fair winds are spread ;

<sup>115</sup> The word, speak of hours of close intercourse, perhaps of companionship in self indulgence, perhaps of imperfect repentance and perplexed doubts like those implied in *HF* l. 2-9

<sup>116</sup> The journey of the travellers had begun, *sc*, on the full moon before Easter

<sup>120</sup> It is a fair inference from the natural way in which Beatrice is named that Forese had known before his death of Dante's devotion to her. It is difficult to see what meaning could be attached to them if she was simply a symbol of the Empire or of a pantheistic heresy

<sup>2</sup> The speed was quick enough for Dante, but, as l. 97 shows, not so for the impatient zeal of Forese to complete his appointed task, and of this Dante is conscious.

And spirits, who as twice dead were to see,  
 From hollow pits of eyes showed wonder great, 5  
 When they perceived a living form in me.  
 And I, continuing spech I held of late,  
 Said: "He, perchance, more slowly mounts on high  
 Than else he would, for others' sake to wait,  
 But tell me, if thou knowest, where doth lie 10  
 Piccarda, and if any of renown  
 Among this gazing crowd I may descry"  
 "My sister, good as she was fair—I own  
 Which she was most I know not—now hath won  
 On high Olympus her triumphal crown." 15  
 So said he first, and then. "Reason is none  
 To hinder naming each, so worn and marred  
 By our hard fare is each complexion.  
 This Buonagunta is," then looking hard,  
 And pointing finger, "he of Lucca named, 20  
 And yonder face, beyond all others scarred,  
 The holy Church as his own spouse hath claimed  
 From Tours was he, and doth by fast atone,  
 Bolsena's cels, Vernaccia's vintage famed"  
 And many others named he one by one, 25  
 And all at being named seemed well content,  
 So that I nowhere saw one gloomy frown  
 I saw, as grinding teeth that foodless went,  
 Ubaldin della Pil', and Boniface,  
 Whose shepherd's staff o'er many a flock was bent, 30

<sup>10</sup> Piccarda, the sister of Forese and Corso, probably a friend of Beatrice's, appears after wards in *Poi* iii 49. She had entered the convent of St. Clara at Florence, had been taken from it by force by her brother Corso and married to Rowellino della Tosa.

<sup>15</sup> The use of Olympus for Paradise reminds us of the "Jove" of *C* vi 118.

<sup>19</sup> Buonagunta Urliciani of Lucca is grouped in *I* *F* 1 13 with Brunetto Latini and others, 71 one whose poems had a touch of provincialism about them, *munici-palia non curi alia*. Dante had known him apparently as a brother poet, lending a somewhat voluptuous life, "a better critic," as *Levi* puts it, "of wines than rhymes."

<sup>21</sup> The Pope is Martin IV, who in 1281 succeeded Nicholas III (*H* xix 46). He showed himself a strong partisan of the house of Anjou, and was therefore an enemy of the Ghibellines. Before his elevation he had been treasurer of the cathedral of Tours. Line 24 points to the special luxury invented by the Papal court. The cels of the lake Bolsena near Viterbo were steeped in *vernaccia*, a white wine of Genoa, and then served in their own sauce. As with the lampreys of our own Henry I, the death of the Pope is said to have been caused by excess in his favourite dish.

<sup>26</sup> The picture of the teeth that bite only the empty air may have come from *Met* viii 826-829.

<sup>29</sup> Ubaldin is said by some early commentators to have been a brother of the Cardinal Octavin of *H* x 120, by others to have been the father of the Archbishop Ruggieri of *H* xxxii 14. Pila was a castle belonging to the Ubaldini in the Casentino district of Tuscany. Of

I saw Messer Marchese, who found place  
 Of yore to drink at Forl, then less dry,  
 While yet his thirst insatiate grew apace.  
 But e'en as he who looks and passes by  
 This one for that, so Lucca's citizen,  
 Who most did seem to know me, drew mine eye.  
 He murmured, and I know not if I then  
 "Gentucca" heard, where wrung him the sharp pain  
 Of that just doom that leaves them bare and lean.  
 "O soul," said I, "whom strong wish doth constrain,"  
 'Twould seem, to speak with me, let me hear thee,  
 And let thy speech to thee and me bring gain."  
 "A maiden fair is born there," answered he,  
 "Unveiled as yet, who'll make my city dear  
 To thee, though on it men cast obloquy,  
 Thou wilt speed on with this prevision clear  
 If in my murmuring thou didst error find,  
 Through living facts the truth shall soon appear  
 But tell me if I see here him whose mind  
 Gave birth to new-framed rhymes which thus began,  
 'O ye who know what love is, ladies know!'"

Boniface we know little. He has been identified with one of the Fieschi family, a nephew of Innocent IV, who in 1274 was chosen as Archbishop of Ravenna. The word *rocco* has been differently translated as a bishop's "rochet" or as a "pastoral staff." Ducauge gives the former as the meaning of the Latin *roccus*. *Dict* (s. 2) gives the history of the word as coming from the Persian, meaning the "rook" or "castle" in a set of chessmen. The pastoral staff of the Archbishop of Ravenna is reported by Lana to have ended, not in the common curved form, but in a shape like that of the chess "rook," and thus seems conclusive as to the meaning with which Dante used the word. It was used in this sense in mediæval French (*Skeat, Etym. Dict* s. v. *hook*).

41. Marchese lies also in the dim obscure but is supposed to have belonged to the Arguoghost of Forl, and to have been the grandfather of Bernardino da Polenta of Ravenna. He is said to have answered, when asked why he was always drinking, that it was because he was always thirsty (*Land*).

47. Most commentators take "Gentucca" as the name of a lady at Lucca, in whose sympathy Dante found comfort. Others, resting on the fact that there is no other instance of the name, take the word as a form of *gentuccia* = the Ghibelline populace. I roja (*l'ellro*, p. 242) has, however, shown that there were two Luccese women of that name in the time of Dante, one the wife of Bernardo Morla Allucanighi, the other the daughter of another member of the same family, and so the natural interpretation is confirmed (*Faur* i 226, *Heb* 242). Line 28 implies that the name came half audible from between the furnished lips of Buonagiunta. Who ever she may have been it is in the highest degree improbable that Dante would have named her as and where he does, had his relation to her passed beyond the limits of an absolutely pure friendship, but in kind to that which he had felt for the gentle lady of *V. N. c.* 36.

48. The prophecy *ex eventu*, though it has been applied to theALIGN of C. xix 142, or the *periploetta* of C. xxxi 5-9, can hardly be referred to any other than the Countess of 1 37, who in 1300 was a girl yet waiting for the "veil" of marriage, but who, when Dante visited the city twelve or fourteen years afterwards, was in the full bloom of married womanhood. Political commentators, clinging to the other interpretation of *Gentuccia* find in it a prediction of the excesses of one or other of the factions at Florence, who should drive Dante into exile, and make him prefer Lucca to his own city.

49. Buonagiunta had already recognised Dante, and the question, therefore, does not imply a doubt as to the identity. But was the *Vita Nuova* his? Had he written the *Canzone*

And I to him · "Behold in me a man,  
 Who, when love breathes, marks, striving to collect  
 What it dictates, and sings it as he can."  
 "Now brother!" spake he, "see I that defect 55  
 Which me, the Notary, and Guittone barred  
 From that style new and sweet thou didst affect.  
 Well do I now perceive how thy wings hard  
 After that sweet dictator upward rose,  
 Flight which to us the fates did not award; 60  
 He who to please outside this limit goes,  
 Indifferently looks on either style."  
 'Then, as content, he brought his speech to close  
 E'en as the birds that winter by the Nile  
 Awhile in ordered squadron take their flight, 61  
 Then fit in haste, and move in single file,  
 So all the crowd who came within our sight,  
 Turning their face, from us sped on apace  
 At once by leanness and by keen wish light;  
 And as the man who, tired of trotting pace, 70  
 Lets his companions pass till he allay  
 The panting of his lungs a little space,

the first line of which is quoted? For us the chief interest of the passage lies in the fact that Dante, in his maturer age (1314), looks back with satisfaction on this *Canzone* (C. 11) as on that in which he recognised most distinctly the characteristic taste of his own genius, *sc.*, that he "sang what was in his heart" as "love taught him to sing" (*V N* c. 9, 24). For Buonagiunta's own poems, see *Rime Ant.* Venice, 1740, pp. 299-303.

<sup>55</sup> The notary is Jacopo da Lentino (*circa* 1250), of whom Dante speaks (*V E* i. 12) as having enriched Italian poetry with a more polished style than his predecessors. Sonnets and Canzoni by him are to be found in most collections of early Italian poetry (*Rime Ant.* pp. 304-321).

Guittone, commonly known as Fra Guittone (he belonged to the order of the Cavalieri Gaudenti, see *Il* xliii. 103), was a poet of Arezzo. He left a wife and three children when he entered the Order, preached against the corruptions of the age, was banished from his own city, and died in Florence in 1294. He could scarcely fail to be known to Dante and the men of letters who were his friends, and probably was one of those whom the great poet first admired, then criticised, and then surpassed. He speaks of him (*V E* i. 13, ii. 6) as wanting in refinement, and in *C.* xxvi. 124 notes his popularity as an instance of the prevalence of fashion over judgment. Petrarch, however (*Trionfi d'Amor* iv. 31), groups him with Cino da Pistoia, and even with Dante himself (*Rime Ant.* pp. 243-268). Buonagiunta is made to acknowledge their inferiority and his own to the new style of Dante.

<sup>59</sup> The "dictator" (the word was probably chosen on account of its double meaning, as meaning 'ruler' or 'inspirer') is, of course, love, as in l. 54.

<sup>61</sup> I have, with *Scart.*, followed the reading *gradire altrui*, instead of *riguardar oltre*, "to look farther," as giving a better sense. The thought is, that he who writes from the desire of praise rather than as the interpreter of love, loses even the critical power which distinguishes a better style from a worse, or, adopting the reading *ricene*, for *vede*, cannot pass from the one to the other. With a profound insight, Dante pointed out the canker which eats into the very life of the poet, and mars his whole work.

<sup>64</sup> The simile is suggested by the flight of cranes, as in *H* v. 46.

So all that holy flock in long array  
 Forese let pass by, and with me went  
 Behind, and said: "When com'st again this way?" 75  
 "How long a span of life to me is lent,  
 I know not," said I, "but on greater speed  
 For that return my wishes will be bent,  
 Seeing that the place where 'twas for me decreed  
 To live, of good is day by day stript bare, 80  
 And seems to shameful ruin to proceed."  
 "Go now," said he, "for him with largest share  
 Of guilt, I see at tail of beast dragged on,  
 Towards the vale where no sins cleansed are.  
 At every step that beast more speed hath won, 85  
 Increasing, till it deal its mortal wound,  
 And leave his corpse to death most foully done  
 Not loave yonder spheres to go their round,"  
 He raised his eyes to Heaven - "ere clear to thee  
 Shall he what speech no clearer may expound 90  
 Now stay thou here, so precious moments be  
 Here in this kingdom that too much I lose,  
 In walking on with thee so equally"  
 As oft a knight his headlong course pursues,  
 And gallops on in front of all the rest, 95  
 And honour in the fight's first onset woo's,  
 So he with paces longer from us pressed,  
 And I with those same two behind remained,  
 Who o'er the world such marshalship possessed.

<sup>74</sup> The old friend seeks to know when his brother-poet shall share with him the task of purification. The question half reminds us of *Johs* xxi 21, the answer of *Phil* i 23. Desire would fain anticipate the decree of God, and take refuge on the further shore from the evils which were coming on himself and on his city.

<sup>84</sup> Forese foretells the death of his own brother Corso. *Vall* (viii 42, 49, 68, 76) tells the tale thus. In 1304 the tide of popular feeling at Florence turned against him. In 1308 he was condemned as a traitor, defended himself against the officers, and people who were sent to take him, at last took flight. He was overtaken and captured by officers who had been sent after him, he slipped from his horse in the hope of escaping, one of the officers wounded him with a spear, and he was taken into the neighbouring abbey of San Salvi, where he died and was buried. Such was the end of the "great lion" of Florence, who had, through his whole career, been Dante's chief enemy. Dante had either heard a more highly coloured version of the story, or, after his manner, as in *Il* v and xxxiii, pictures to himself what must have been. The "valley" is that of *Il* iv 8, *l'ar* viii 137. Even Forese is made to pass that judgment on his brother's fate.

<sup>86</sup> Possibly a reminiscence of Campaldino, such as we have met in *C* v 92, *Il* xxii 1, 9.

<sup>90</sup> I have used the word "marshalship" as the exact equivalent of Dante's "*mariscalchi*." The word had risen from its original meaning of "groom" ("mare's servant") to that of high military rank. Rhyme probably suggested the word, choice accepted it as the fittest that could be used. Comp *Skeat, Et Dict* 10.

And when he had so far the distance gained, 100  
 That mine eyes followed on his form to gaze,  
 As did my mind on what his words contained,  
 Behold, another tree its boughs displays  
 Fruit-laden, full of life, not distant too,  
 For only then we thither turned our ways. 105  
 Raising their hands a people came in view  
 Beneath it, and towards its leaves they cried,  
 I know not what, as eager fond boys do,  
 Who pray, what he they pray to hath denied,  
 But, as to make their wishes yet more keen, 110  
 Holds up the longed for prize and doth not hide.  
 Then went they on, as though the trick were seen,  
 And we now came towards that lofty tree,  
 Which to such tears and prayers so deaf had been  
 "Pass on your way, nor nearer draw, the tree 115  
 Whereof Eve ate the fruit is found more high,  
 And thus from that draws its nativity"  
 Thus one I knew not from the boughs did cry,  
 So Virgil, Statius, I, our curso pursued,  
 Where the hill upward slopes, in company. 120  
 "Remember," thence he said, "tho cursed brood,  
 Of clouds begotten, who, with wine o'erspent,  
 With twy-form breasts had Theseus fain subdued.  
 Those Hebrews also who to drink low bent,  
 Whom Gideon spurned as comrades in the fight, 125  
 When he to Midian down the hill-side went."  
 So keeping still one margin near in sight  
 We onward went, and heard of crimes of sense,  
 On which there followed gain of wretched plight.

101 He saw Forest indistinctly as he passed into the distance, and with a hie indistinctness followed the meaning of his words

108 The tree was different from that of C. xxii 130, and, as stated in l 116, was a tree of the tree of knowledge. The only still crave for its fruit, but here the voice which comes from the tree, as from its guardian angel, is that of stern prohibition. They must drink of Lethe and Eunoe, and eat of the fruit of the tree of life first. The knowledge which makes men as gods requires wisdom as a safeguard

121 The voice tells of those who had sinned through excess (1) of the Centaurs, sons of Ixion and the Clouds (*Met* viii 7), who were invited to the marriage feast of Peirithous and Hippodamia, and, when flushed with insolence and wine, sought to carry off the bride. As in the bas relief of the Elgin Marbles they were repelled and slain by Theseus (*Met* xii 210-535, *Hor* *Od* i 18). The "twy form breasts" are those of man and horse

124 The classical example is matched from Scripture (*Judg* vi 21, vii 25)

126 The "gains" were, for Eve, the loss of Paradise, for the Centaurs, death, for the Hebrews, exclusion from the glory of victory.

Then on the lonely road with free course thence, 130  
 A thousand steps or more we took our way,  
 Without a word, each plunged in thought intense  
 "Why do ye three alone thus pensive stray?"  
 A voice said on the sudden, and I turned,  
 As horses do, when smitten with dismay. 135  
 I raised my head, that so might be discerned  
 Who it was spake, and never furnace fire,  
 Or glass, or metals, with such red glow burned,  
 As I saw one who said, "If ye desire  
 Upward to pass, ye needs must turn this way, 140  
 This is his path who doth to peace aspire."  
 His aspect dread had ta'en my sight away,  
 Wherefore I turned to those my teachers wise,  
 As one who, as he heareth, on doth stray,  
 And e'en as comes, proclaiming day's clear rise, 145  
 The breeze of May, with odours fresh and sweet  
 Impregnate, that from grass and flowers arise,  
 So felt I then the breath of Zephyr meet  
 My brow, and heard of wings the rustling sound,  
 Wafting ambrosial gales the sense to greet, 150  
 And heard it say, "Blest are they who abound  
 In light of grace, that so their appetite  
 Rouse no desire within, o'erpassing bound,  
 Hungering within the limits of the right."

134 The voice came from the Angel of Abstinence, whom Dante sees glowing with a brightness like that of *Ezek* i 7, *Dan* v 6, *Rev* i 15. He points to the entrance of the seventh circle.

145 Beautiful as is the picture, we must remember that it is meant to be a symbol of the clear brightness and sweetness of the temperate life. The breeze that strikes on Dante's brow effaces another of the seven P's as he passes out of the Circle of the Gluttonous. His thoughts of ambrosia were drawn from *Virg. Georg.* iv 415, *Aen.* i 403.

151 The closing words are a paraphrase of *Matt* v 6, the meaning being somewhat altered, as though it stood, "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst righteously" ("secundum iustitiam," *1. nig.*), whose higher appetite regulates their lower.



## CANTO XXV.

*The Mysteries of Man's first and second Births—The Sins of Lust.*

'Twas time without delay we journeyed on,  
 For now on the meridian line the day  
 Was marked by Taurus, night by Scorpion.  
 Wherefore, as one is wont who will not stay,  
 But wends his way, whatever may appear, 5  
 If spur of need pricks hard against delay,  
 So entered we upon the winding stair,  
 Each before other as the gap we elomb,  
 So narrow that it parts the climbers there,  
 And, like the nestling stork that longs to roam, 10  
 And lifts its wing and lets it droop again,  
 And ventures not to leave its sheltering home,  
 So was I with a wish that burnt amain  
 To ask, and then was quenched, until at last  
 I showed as one whose lips to speak are fain; 15  
 And my sweet Father, though our pace was fast,  
 Forbore not, but spake then. "Discharge the bow  
 Of speech, wherein the steel the wood hath passed"  
 Then opened I my mouth without ado,  
 And thus began "But how can men grow thin 20  
 Where they no need of nourishment can know?"  
 "If thou with Meleager wouldst begin,"  
 Said he, "life wasting with the wasted brand,  
 This would not be so hard for thee to win,

<sup>1</sup> As in other like passages (C ix 1-9, xix 1-4), I content myself with the result that the astronomical facts indicate the hour of 2 P. M. The fact that less than half the day remained leads the pilgrims to press on.

<sup>2</sup> Comp. *Matte* vii 14. Each one must take the upward path alone. Repentance and purification exclude at times even the blessing of companion-ship.

<sup>3</sup> One remembers how common an object the stork is in Italian and Swiss caves. In the timidity of the fledgling's desire to fly Dante finds a parable of his own desire to know. The problem is, to account for the fact of the leanness of hunger where life no longer exists under the same conditions as of old.

<sup>4</sup> The instance of Meleager (*Met* viii 451-525) furnishes an argument from analogy. His life had depended, not on the common laws of nutrition, but as the Fates had decreed, on the burning of a firebrand which his mother had snatched from the hearth at the time of his birth, and, in her wrath at his slaughter of her brother when he grew to manhood, threw into the fire. As it was consumed, so was he. We smile at Ovid's tale being dealt with as a fact. Did Dante so deal with it, or did he only refer to it as showing what was conceivable?

Or wouldst reflect how to your wave of hand 25  
 The mirror's image waving too doth move,  
 What now seems hard were light to understand.  
 But that thou gain the ease thy will doth love,  
 Lo, here is Statius, him I call, and pray  
 That he a healer of thy wounds may prove." 30  
 "If I to him the eternal things display,"  
 Then answered Statius, "e'en when thou art nigh,  
 Let me plead this, I cannot say thee nay."  
 Then he began. "My son, the words that I  
 Shall utter let thy watchful mind record; 35  
 They to the 'How?' thou ask'st will light supply  
 Blood in its perfect state, which still is stored,  
 And ne'er is drunk up by the thirsty veins,  
 Like viands which thou takest from the board,  
 There, in the heart, from all men's members gains 40  
 Creative force, as that which doth the same  
 Repair, while circling, it that power attains,  
 Again concoct, in parts which not to name  
 Is best, it flows, and then is poured upon  
 Another's blood in vase of Nature's frame. 45  
 There this and that together meet as one,  
 This apt to work, that passive to receive  
 What this from its perfected source hath won

<sup>24</sup> The argument from Table 14 followed by one from the laws of reflection, on which Dante, like Roger Bacon, loved to dwell (*Par* II 97-105). The implied thought is that in reality the body, especially the modified body after death, is the mirror of the soul, shares its movements and reproduces its changes.

<sup>25</sup> We ask why the physiological theory which follows is put into the mouth of Statius and not of Virgil. The answer probably is that the latter was thought of as the representative of ethical and political wisdom, but that the higher mysteries of the life of the body in its relation to the soul belong to the former as illumined by the light of revealed truth.

<sup>26</sup> I follow the reading *reduta* (= that which is seen) rather than *vendetta*, which is entirely out of harmony with the context.

<sup>27</sup> Of all the digressions in the *Comm.*, this, and that on the nature of the spots on the moon in *Par* II, seems the least in place. To enter into Dante's thoughts, we must enter into the tendency, which he shared with Latin and other, of which we have an example in the *Conv.* to something like a display, which in a later age would have been ostentatious, of a wide encyclopedic knowledge. In *Conv.* IV 21, especially, we note how he, a student of natural science, was fascinated by the mysteries of embryology, as he found them either in Aristotle (*de Gen. Anim.*), or Albert of Cologne or Aquinas (*Summa* I q. 99). The lecture deals, however, with higher problems than those of physiology. Lines 70-72 give Dante's judgment on the questions of traducianism or creation, as connected with the soul. As in *C.* XVI 85-90, *Par* VII 142, he decides in favour of the latter.

<sup>28</sup> The phrase "informing power" is essentially characteristic of medieval thought. It implies the possession, in that of which it is predicated, of the power of reproducing all from which it was supposed to be derived. All the form (in both senses of the word) of the human body was already there potentially.

<sup>29</sup> The "perfected source" is the heart, from which, as in I 47, the blood, and that which is formed from it, receive their "informing power."

Thus joined, at once it worketh to conceive,  
 Coagulating first, then breathing life 80  
 In that where it doth form to matter give.  
 The active virtue then, with soul-powers rife,  
 As of a plant—just so far different  
 That that moves on its way, this ends its strife,—  
 Doth then so work that to the same extent 85  
 As a sea-fungus it doth move, feel, show  
 Its power to frame the organs whence 'twas sent  
 And now, my son, is seen to spread and grow  
 The virtue of his heart who generates,  
 Where Nature's care o'er every limb doth flow 90  
 But how the living soul with reason mates  
 Thou see'st not yet, this point it is which one,  
 Wiser than thou art, erring much, misstates,  
 So that his teaching sets apart, alone,  
 Potential reason from the living soul, 95  
 Seeing no organ that it makes its own  
 Now ope thy breast to truth that I unroll,  
 And learn that soon as in the embryo  
 The structure of the brain becomes a whole,

<sup>81</sup> The "matter" is thought of as supplied by the female, the "form" by the male. The whole passage is hardly more than a paraphrase of Aquinas (*Summ.* i 98 2, iii 33 2) the term "coagulating" comes from the *Vulg.* of *Job* x 10, *It sed vii 2*

<sup>82</sup> The human life begins with the lower life of the plant, or rather of the zoophyte (l. 57), with this difference, that the latter has reached its appointed goal, the former is in process of evolution

<sup>83</sup> The question then comes, how does the plant or lower animal life develop into the human? On this point Dante rejects the teaching of Averroës, who held what is known as the theory of Iraducianism, i.e., that the soul was transmitted by the parent as well as the corporeal life, and adopts that of Creationism, held by Aquinas (l. c.) and mediæval theologians generally, i.e., that the soul or intellect of man had its origin in a direct creative act. The "possible intellect" was the "universal mind," the intellect of God, "possible," as containing the potency of all human intellectual energy, which alone has immortality. Averroës, finding no special organ in the body for the intellect, as the eye is the instrument of sight and the ear of hearing, assumed that man's intellect was in fact the Divine Mind working within self-imposed limits. From the standpoint of Aquinas and Dante, it seemed (1) that this view involved Pantheism, and therefore the denial of man's personality, and (2) that it followed from it that when the working of the universal intellect ceased at death, there was no soul to survive as the heir of immortality (*Dan.* p. 419, Renan, *Averroës*, p. 122 *et seq.*, 117 1, Aquin. c. *Genet.* ii 73, *Summ.* i 86 2, 118 2)

<sup>84</sup> We note (1) that Dante views the soul as coming from a direct divine inbreathing into the body made ready for the act of the first Mover (*Par.* vii 142, xxxiii 145), (2) that, anticipating modern physiology, he finds in the brain that which is as much the organ of the soul as the eye and the ear are of their respective senses. Comp. C. xvi 85-90. The spirit unites itself in the embryo with the lower life, which it finds already in activity, and becomes the soul, which lives as the plant lives, feels as the animal feels, and reflects, i.e., possesses the self-consciousness which is the peculiar attribute of humanity. As an analogue of that union, with a profound thought which reminds us almost of Drummond's *Natural Law in the Spiritual World*, Dante points to one of the parables of Nature. The heat of the sun combines with that of the unripe grape to form the wine, but the wine is not afterwards resolvable into those two elements. "So when life comes to an end, when Lachesis ceases to spin (C. xxi 25), it carries with it, and "as of right" (I take this as the best equivalent to the "in virtute" of the original), the human and divine elements, henceforth indissolubly united

Then the Prime Mover turns to it, and lo!  
 Glad at such art of Nature, breatheth in  
 A spirit new, whose potencies o'erflow,  
 For what it there finds active it doth win  
 To its own substance, and one soul is made,  
 Which lives, and feels, itself itself within 7.  
 And that thou wonder less at what was said,  
 See how the sun's heat generateth wine,  
 Into the juice that flows from vine conveyed  
 When Lachesis hath run out all her line,  
 It from the flesh is freed, and, as of right, 80  
 Bears with itself the human and divine  
 And all the other powers are silent quite,  
 But memory, intelligence, and will  
 Are found in act with more than former might  
 Then without pause it passeth on, until 81  
 It marvellously reacheth either shore,  
 And then first knows what path awaits it still  
 Soon as that elme doth compass it all o'er,  
 The virtue formative rays out around,  
 As much as when the living limbs it bore 90  
 And, as the air, when raimy mists abound,  
 By rays of alien light which it reflects,  
 Is seen with many-tinted colours crowned,  
 So then the air around the soul collects  
 Into that form which on it hath imprest 91  
 The soul that stays, whose virtue thus effects  
 And, in like manner as the flame's thin crest  
 Follows the fire wherever it may rove.  
 So is the soul with that new garment drest,

<sup>80</sup> In fact, however, the faculties which depend on the bodily organs are inactive without those organs, or analogous organs which supply their place, while the mental powers, memory, intelligence, will, are more active than before. This would involve in the purely incorporeal state of the departed soul the cessation of all feeling, and therefore, even then, before the resurrection of the body, it is clothed as with a new corporeity adapted to the intermediate state, as the "spiritual body" of 1 Cor. xv. 42-44 will be to that of the resurrection.

<sup>81</sup> The process of that clothing is described. As soon as the soul knows after death, as it stands before the Judge (// v. 7), whether Hell or Paradise is its appointed home, the "informing power" (l. 41) comes into play again, as it had done before, impresses upon the air that surrounds it its own form, as the sun impresses its colours upon mists, and takes a shadowy simulacrum of its former body, that can see, hear, feel as that body had done, though it lacks the attribute of solidity. Such is Dante's theory of the intermediate state, based, in this instance, on Plato and the Alexandrian fathers, rather than on Augustine and Aquinas (in *Suppl.* vii. 79 lxxxix art. lxx. 1-3).

<sup>91</sup> Yet another analogy presents itself. Where there is a centre of fire, the flame that issues

Wherefore with outward gait it moveth thence, 100  
 And as a shade is known, and thus doth frame,  
 Even to sight, the organs of each sense.  
 So is it that we speech and laughter claim,  
 So is it that we form the tears and sighs  
 That on the Mountam to thy hearing came 105  
 According as desires within us rise,  
 And other feelings, so is formed the shade,  
 And hence comes that which caused thee such surprise "  
 To the last turning now our way we made,  
 And then we, winding to the right hand, went, 110  
 Our eager thoughts by yet a new care swayd.  
 There from the bank a fiery flame is sent,  
 And upwards doth the cornice breathe a blast  
 By which far off 'tis driven and backward bent ,  
 Hence on the open side, perforce, we passed, 115  
 In single file, on this side of the flame  
 Afraid, on that with fear to fall aghast  
 And my Guide said, " Here need we that we tame  
 Our wandering eyes with tightened curb and rein,  
 For one false step might make us miss our aim " 120  
 "*Summæ Deus clementiæ*" was the strain  
 I heard from out the depth of that great heat,  
 Which not the less did me to turn constrain ,

from it follows it, and thus the shadow body follows the soul to which it is attached. So the soul sees and feels, weeps and sighs, speaks and sings, through its new organ, and the new garment of the soul, sharing its emotion, can prevent the appearance of emaciation, which answers to the spiritual condition of the soul that hungers and thirsts after righteousness, and which, in 120, had been the starting point of the digression.

109 I have taken the word *fortuna* (with Scott and Butl.) in its etymological sense rather than as = torment which it came to have in later Italian. The pilgrims have reached the highest circle of the Mountain, in which the sin of impurity finds its discipline, and there is no farther ascent. The mountain side breathes forth flame, from the cornice or edge of the path comes a strong wind, and the travellers have to walk between the two. The wind coming from the circle which has just been passed may represent, as it were, the atmosphere of temperance which is one condition of the attainment of purity. In such a path it is needful to walk warily.

121 As elsewhere it is the hymn as a whole, rather than the single line quoted, which commends itself to the poet's choice. In the modern Breviary of the Latin Church a hymn is found in the Mass for Saturday which begins "*Summæ Patens Clementiæ*," and two of its verses may be quoted as showing why Dante chose it —

" *Nostros, pios cum cantibus,  
 Plenus benigne suscipe,  
 Ut corde puro solidum  
 Te perfruamur largius*

*Lumbos jecurque morbidum  
 Flammis adure congruis,  
 Accincti ut artus excubent  
 Luxu remoto pessimo "*

And I saw spirits through the red flame fleet ;  
 Wherefore, with glances parted here and there, 125  
 I looked at them, and then at mine own feet  
 And, hard on that which closed their hymn of prayer,  
 They cried aloud, " Behold, I know not man,"  
 And then their hymn renewed in low voice clear,  
 And that too ended, they cried out, " Dian 130  
 Turned to the wood, thence Helice to chase,  
 Since through her veins the taint of Venus ran,"  
 And then they turned to sing, and sang the praise  
 Of ladies and of husbands who were chaste,  
 As those whom virtue in their wedlock sway, 135

I add a somewhat free translation—

We pray Thee, Lord, accept the bitter tears  
 Which we, with holy song, pour full and free,  
 That, with a heart where nothing foul appears,  
 We share the joy of those who gave on Thee

O burn I thou up with well-tempered fires  
 The heart diseased, the passions base within,  
 Till it, with loins girt and purified desires,  
 We stand on guard against each lustful sin

A hymn beginning exactly in Dante's words is found in the Roman Breviary for the Feast of the Seven Sorrows of the Virgin (*scail*), but the one that has been quoted lends itself so much more to his purpose that there can scarcely be a doubt that it was what he meant to quote. A slip of memory or a various reading may account for the '*Dans*' instead of '*patiens*'.

127 The hymn ends with a doxology. The verse which follows those already quoted may have been in Dante's mind.

"*Quicumque ut horis nocturnis  
 Num. concinendo sumimus,  
 Dilectum omnes affatim  
 Tonis beatorum patrum*"

Grant that all we, who now with anthems clear  
 Cast off the drowsy spell of night's long rest,  
 May share in fullest measure, free from fear,  
 The gifts of that dear land where dwell the blest

We note (l. 124) that fire is the instrument of purifying discipline from the sins of lust as in *II* xv it had been simply retributive punishment for those who had no capacity for the former. In that case also it is symbolic. The new fire must burn out the old. So Virgil (*En* vi 740)—

"*Illic aut gurgite vasto  
 Infectum eluitur oculus, aut exuritur igni*"

128 The words of the Virgin (*Iuke* i 34) become the ideal pattern of chastity as of the other graces opposed to the seven deadly sins, of which those of sensual passion are the last and worst. Dante follows in the footsteps of Bonaventura (*Speculum B V M* c 4).

130 As elsewhere, Dante mingles, with a union which to us seems strange, but which was natural to him, the lessons of classical mythology with those of the Gospel. Thus the holy horror when she discovered the fall of Helice (= Callisto), who had been seduced by Jupiter, marked her out also as the ideal of a pure womanhood (*Met* ii 441-465). One line of that passage was, it may be, prominent in Dante's thoughts—

"*Heu quam difficile est crimen non proderat cultu*"

In *Par* xxxi 32 we have another allusion to the same myth.

134 The spirits recall the examples, not only of the purity of an ascetic, but of those who, in the observance of the divine law, had shown that marriage also has its ideal of chastity, both for man and woman.

And this tune is enough, I trow, to last,  
 Through all the time they suffer in the fire,  
 With such care and such diet is effaced,  
 As need is, the last wound of ill desire

## CANTO XXVI

*The Sins of Lust—Guido Guinicelli—Arnould Daniel*

WHILE on the margin onward thus we went  
 In single file, my Master often spake  
 "Take heed, for good be this admonishment"  
 On my right shoulder then the sunbeams brake,  
 And with their rays changed all the western sky,  
 And bade the azure a new whiteness take,  
 And with my shadow ruddier yet did I  
 Make the flame glow, and then that portent new  
 Full many shades I saw, in passing, eye  
 And this led them fresh converse to pursue, 10  
 Speaking of me, and thus their words did frame  
 To say "In this no body false we view"  
 Then, towards me turning, certain of them came  
 Far as they could, yet ever with due care  
 Lest they should pass beyond the burning flame 11  
 "O thou who, not, perchance, through sloth, dost fire  
 Behind the others, but through reverence,  
 Answer to me who thirst in this fire's glare,  
 Nor to me only must thou speech dispense,  
 For all thou se'st thirst more thy words to hear  
 Than for cool stream doth Ethiop's parched sense

<sup>10</sup> The last wound is that of sensual desire—the P still uneffaced on Dante's brow. The scorching fire and the hymns are the regimen which work out the patient cure.

<sup>11</sup> The description of dawn may be compared with C II 6-9. Both seen to tell of one whose habit of soul it was to watch for the morning.

<sup>12</sup> Comp C V 25. We note the keen eye of the observer of all phenomena of light. The shadow falling on flame is not seen as it falls on the wall but it makes the flame seem redder. The spirits in the fire are conscious of this and feel that it comes from a body which is unlike their own.

<sup>13</sup> The souls will not interrupt their progress to purity even for a moment but are eager to know how it is that Dante's body casts a shadow.

Tell us how 'tis thou dost thyself uprear  
 As wall against the sun, as though not yet  
 Thou didst within the net of death appear?"  
 So one then spake, and I had straightway set  
 Myself to show it, had I not been led  
 To gaze on wonder new that mine eyes met,  
 For through the mid-path, glowing fiery red,  
 A troop took, face to face with them, their way,  
 Which made me gaze yet more astonishèd. 30  
 Then on each side I saw each shade display  
 Much haste, and each to kiss the other sped,  
 Nor made, content with greeting brief, delay.  
 So oft, within their dusk-brown host, proceed  
 This ant and that, till muzzle muzzle meet,  
 Spying their way, or how affairs succeed  
 Soon as they cease each other thus to greet,  
 Ere the first step they take in separate way,  
 Each to outcry the other's voice is fleet  
 "To! Sodom and Gomorrah," these did say,  
 The other, "In the cow went Pasiphèd,  
 That so the bull might do its wanton play"  
 And then as cranes which this and that way flee,  
 Or to Rhiphæan hills or parchèd sand,  
 From frost these, sun those, seeking to be free, 40  
 One troop departs, comes on the other band,  
 And turn in bitter tears to their first song,  
 And to the cry their several sins demand,  
 And, as before, they did around me throng,  
 The very same who came with their request,  
 With looks that told how they to hear did long 50

<sup>32</sup> The kiss which is part of the process of a growing purity must be thought of as after the pattern of the kiss of peace, the kiss of charity (*Rom* xvi 16, *1 Cor* xvi 20 *1 Pet* v 14, *cf al*). What had been the expression and the stimulus of impure desire was now the kiss of chaste affection.

<sup>34</sup> The similitude may have grown out of the poet's own keen habits of observation, but parallels present themselves in *AÆ* iv 404, *Met* vii 624-636. Line 16 seems almost to anticipate Huber or Sir John Lubbock, or the striking passage on ants in Kean's *Hymenothoe* (*Works*, iii 11-13).

<sup>40</sup> The words point to the extremest form of debasement (*Gen* xix, *II* xu 12, 13), to which all sensual passion tends, brutalising those who yield to it. Comp. l. 82.

<sup>43</sup> For the Rhiphæan Mountains, probably the Ural chain, see Virgil, *Georg* i 240, iv 518. As a fact in natural history, cranes would hardly be seen at the same time flying in opposite directions, but each of the two bands of spirits so moving brought back to his mind the picture of such a flight. Comp. C. xxiiv 64, *II* v 42.



And I, who twice had seen their eager quest,  
 Began to speak - "O happy souls, secure,  
 Whene'er it come, of state of peaceful rest,  
 Nor as a timely fruit nor premature, 55  
 My limbs are yonder left, but here with me  
 They with their blood and jointed frame endure  
 From hence I climb, no longer blind to be,  
 A gracious Lady gives that grace on high,  
 Thus through your world I bear mortality. 60  
 So may your greatest longing satisfy  
 Itself full soon, and may ye that Heaven gain  
 Which, filled with love, expands through widest sky,  
 Tell me, that I on paper write it plain,  
 Who ye may be, and who that multitude 65  
 Which, to your back turned, turns its back again?"  
 Not otherwise the mountaineer, subdued  
 By wonder, dazed and silent, looks around,  
 If, rough and rustic, he in towns intrude,  
 Than every spirit then in men was found; 70  
 But when they were from that amazement freed,  
 Which in high hearts soon ceases to astound,  
 "O blest art thou who in our coats dost read,"  
 Resumed he then who first had made request,  
 "Full proof how men to better life proceed! 75  
 Tho troop that comes not with us have transgressed  
 In that which brought of old on Cæsar's ear  
 The cry of 'Quoon!' his triumph to molest;  
 Therefore their cry of 'Sodon!' thou dost hear,  
 As they depart, in words of self-despito, 80  
 And by their shame the fire make more severe

<sup>53</sup> If it seem strange that such words should be spoken of souls stained with such sins, we may remember St Paul's "Such were some of you" (1 Cor vi 12).

<sup>59</sup> The "gracious lady" is not Beatrice, but the Blessed Virgin (*H* ii 94).

<sup>63</sup> The empyrean, which lies outside the planetary and crystalline spheres, and in its perfect calm is thought of as the home of the blessed (*Conv* ii 4, Aquin *Summ* i 70 3, 102 2).

<sup>64</sup> The request implies (1) that the penitents should not shrink from the open confession of their sin, (2) that Dante's wish is to make known on earth, for the comfort of their friends, that they are on their way to Paradise.

<sup>78</sup> The sin of the one company is told in all plainness of speech. Line 77 refers to the scandalous stories which were told of Cæsar's youth in the court of Nicomedes of Bithynia, and of which the rude jests of soldiers and senators at times reminded him (Sueton *Jul Cæs* c 49).

The sin that stains us was hermaphrodite,  
 But because we broke through all human law,  
 Following, like beasts, each passing appetite,  
 In very scorn of self, as we withdraw, 80  
 We speak her name whom bestial lust did call  
 Within the wooden monster's bestial maw  
 Now knowest thou our acts and whence our fall,  
 If thou our names wouldst know and who we are,  
 There is not time, nor do I know them all. 90  
 But if thou wish I will myself declare.  
 I Guido Guinicelli am, and so  
 Am cleansed, because I mourned while death was far"  
 E'en as they were who in Lyeurgus' woe  
 Rushed, those two sons, their mother to behold, 95  
 So did I,—but so far I did not go,  
 When I thus heard his name who was of old  
 My sire and theirs, my country's nobler men,  
 Skilled to use love rhymes sweet and manifold.  
 Nor hearing aught nor speaking, sorrowing then, 100  
 Long time I walked with gaze upon him bent,  
 The fire still hindering near approach, and when

<sup>82</sup> The strange words have led to many conjectures, some of them taking us into a chamber of horrors, like those of *C 117 c*. A simpler explanation is also the truer. The sin described is that of natural passion is contrasted with unnatural the sin of Hermaphrodite, the types of male and female (*in uteroque praterque*, *Met* iv 290), of Priolo and Francesca, but the natural passion is illicitly indulged, breaks through the restraints of reason and of the laws that are meant for man as having a higher life than beasts, and therefore it omits as simply animal as the degradation indicated by the name which they repeat as a confession that they too had acted as brute beasts that have no understanding. The Marriage Sermon. Exhortation, from which these words are taken, sets forth the ideal of the true relation of the man and the woman which lust degrades. *Comp Pict Lomb Sentit* iv dist 26-42, *Aquin Summ* ii c 151-156.

<sup>92</sup> The rest of the *Canto* has the interest of being a fuller contribution to Dante's mental autobiography (for his spiritual confessions see *C xxx, xxxi*) than we find elsewhere. Guido Guinicelli (*d* circ. 1250, *d* 1276) was a scholar, priest, poet of Bologna. Dante names him in *V* 115 as the greatest of the Bolognese poets (*Comp C xi 97*), and in *Il* v 100 reproduces the leading thought of one of his *Canzoni*—

"*Al cor gentil ripara sempre Amore*

Here he recognises him as his master in poetry (*Comp Faunet* i 262, *Rim Ant* p 288).

<sup>94</sup> The story of the sons of Lyeurgus, Iphias and Eunoeus, comes from Statius (*Theb* v 721 *et seq*) and has been already referred to (*C xxii 114*). They recognised their mother in an unlooked for meeting, and then—

"*Per tela matrisque  
 Irruerunt, matremque avidis complexibus ambo  
 Diripiunt stentes alternaque pectora mutant*

So Dante says he acted when he knew that he stood in the presence of his instructor and father in the poet's art.

<sup>96</sup> The poet had, it would seem, conquered the pride which had once led him to exalt himself, and now looks back on the singers of the past as better than himself. The words confirm the view which I have taken of *C xi 99*. It may be that in specifying 'love rhymes' as the things in which he walked in their steps, there is a latent consciousness that he was now treading the "*avia Pieridum loca*," in which none had gone before him.

My look had fed on him with full content,  
 I gave myself to render service due,  
 With that assurance which commands assent. 105  
 And he to me. "Thou leav'st such traces true  
 In me from what I hear, and all so clear,  
 That Lethe cannot blot nor dim their hue,  
 But if thy words the very truth did swear,  
 Tell me the reason why thou now dost show 110  
 By look and word thou holdest me so dear?"  
 And I to him. "Thy songs, that sweetly flow,  
 Which, long as this our modern use shall last,  
 Shall still endear the ink that made them grow."  
 "O brother," said he, pointing as one passed, 115  
 "He, whom with finger I mark out to thee,  
 Me in the craft of mother speech surpassed,  
 In songs of love and prose romances he  
 Surpassed them all, let then the babblers say 120  
 They giv' the Limousin the victory,  
 To clamour more than truth they homage pay,  
 And thus it is they form their estimate  
 Ere art and reason find to them their way  
 So many did of old Guittone rate, 125  
 Now this voice and now that praised him alone,  
 Till truth had with the many greater weight.  
 Now, if to thee such special grace be shown  
 That thou hast leave that cloister-home to gain  
 Where Christ as abbot of the house is known,

113 The "modern use" is that of writing in the *lingua volgarre*, Provençal or Italian, of which there had been no examples till within one hundred and fifty years of Dante's time (*l. A* c. 25). Pier delle Vigne (*ll.* xiv. 58) who flourished in Frederick II's court at Palermo, the Emperor himself also being a poet, was one of the earliest of the Sicilian School.

116 Guinicelli also has learnt the lesson of humility, and points to Arnould Daniel as a greater poet than himself. Arnould, as the sequel shows, was a Provençal poet. Dante (*V. B.* ii. 10) looks to him also as his master, and Petrarch (*l. r. r.* iv. 40-42) places him among the foremost poets of his time. He was said to have been the inventor of the *Sestina*, perhaps of the *Terza Rima* also. Sixteen of his *Canzoni* have come down to us (*Dier. I. r.* pp. 344-360). He also wrote a romance of Lancelot of the Lake, which may have been read by Paolo and Francesca (*ll.* v. 107). The fact that he and Guinicelli are found in this circle shows that they were not free from the sensual vices of their time.

120 The Limousin is Gerard de Bornello of Limoges, or rather, perhaps, of the province of Limousin, lying to the west of Auvergne, of whom Dante speaks (*l. P.* ii. 2) as being, like himself, the "poet of righteousness," Arnould being the poet of love, and as standing, in Dante's estimate, on a higher level as a writer.

121 The poet passes judgment, as in C. xxiv. 58-60, on the critics who followed, not the true rules of art, but the fashion of the day.

124 Guittone of Arezzo is named as another instance of misplaced praise. Comp. C. xxiv. 56.

Say for me there one Paternoster plain, 110  
 So far as in this world of ours we need,  
 Where power to sin no longer doth remain."  
 And then, as if perchance his place to cede  
 To one behind, he vanished in the flame,  
 Like fish that to the water's depth recede. 115  
 Nigh unto him he pointed at I came,  
 And said my heart was longing to enfold,  
 In homo that gave it welcome, that his name  
 Then he began free speech with me to hold  
 "So pleases me thy courteous request, 120  
 I neither can nor will leave that untold.  
 Arnauld am I, who sing, with grief oppress,  
 All my past folly, as now meets thine eye,  
 And joyous see before me hope's day blest  
 And now I pray thee, by the Virtue high 125  
 That leads thee to the summit of the stairs,  
 In due time think thou of my agony "  
 Then to the cleansing fire his form repairs.

## CANTO XXVII.

*The fiery Furnace—The Slumber on the Mountain—The Vision of  
 Leah—Vulgi's Farewell*

LEVEN as when he darts his earliest rays  
 There where his Maker shed for us His blood,  
 While Ebro's stream 'neath lofty Libra stays,

117 The cloister of which Christ is abbot is, of course, Paradise. It is characteristic of Dante that he sees in the ideal pattern of monastic life, in spite of its actual corruptions, the earthly type of the communion of saints. Comp *Par* xi 99

121 The limitation is that already indicated in C. xi. The souls in Purgatory had no need of the prayer "Lead us not into temptation."

120 The words of Arnauld in the original are given in Provençal. As might be expected in Italian copyists ignorant of that language, the MSS. abound in variations and errors. The version I have given is based upon the text given by Scott from *Dier's Trouba* p. 347. One v. l. in l. 127, *tempiar for temps de*, would give, "I think thou on me to soothe my agony." Another in l. 126 gives, "Which guides thee without cold or scorching airs," but this is at variance with what follows in C. xxvii. The "past folly" of l. 123 is the sensuality which Arnauld was now expiating.

1 It was sunrise at Jerusalem, sunset on the Mountain of Purgatory, noon (the Nones of the Church's day, i. e., 12 to 3) on the Ganges, midnight on the Ebro. The two latter points are

And Ganges feels its heat at noon renewed,  
 So stood the sun, and thus the day was o'er, 3  
 When God's great angel glad before us stood  
 Outside the flame, toward the edge he bore,  
 And then "*Beati mundo corde*" sang,  
 With voice that had of life than our's far more  
 And then, "No path is here unless the pang 11  
 Of fire ye feel, O holy souls, pass on,  
 Not deaf to that clear song that yonder ring"  
 So spake he, as more near approach we won,  
 Wherefore I then became, when him I heard,  
 As one who in a sepulchre is thrown 1  
 Then I bent forward, with clasped hands upreared,  
 On the fire gazing, picturing in my mind  
 Men's bodies I had seen all burnt and seared  
 And then towards me my good Guides inclined,  
 And Virgil said, "My son, here pain may be, 20  
 And torment, but death here thou shalt not find  
 Bethink thee, yea, bethink thee, if in me  
 Thou, e'en on Geryon, foundest trusty guide,  
 What shall I do now God more near I see?  
 Be well assured that, should'st thou here abide 2  
 Within this womb of flame a thousand year,  
 No loss of e'en one hair should thee betide,  
 And if perchance to cheat thee I appear,  
 Draw nigh and with thine hands the trial make  
 Upon the garment's fringe that thou dost wear 30

reckoned by the poet astronomer 15 90° east and west respectively from Jerusalem. We see Dante, as it were, with his sphere before him. For the existence of such globes in the 13th century see *Acropolis* pp. 104-114. There is perhaps as Peter Dante notes a symbolic meaning in the fact that the discipline comes at the hour so often given to the works of darkness.

<sup>6</sup> There are two angels on the last circle of the Mountain: one the Angel of Purity on the nearer side of the flame, the other (l. 55) on the farther side, the Warden of the earthly Paradise.

<sup>7</sup> We need to supply the completion of the beatitude of *Matt* v. 8, "*Quia Deum videbunt*," and that vision comes only through the cleansing fire.

<sup>14-18</sup> Flesh and spirit quail before the fiery ordeal even more than they had done in C. xx. 130 and the pilgrim is as one dead at the bare thought. He had seen heretics, traitors, cowards (possibly Capocchio in 1297 // *xxix* 136) perish at the stake and shuddered at the sight. We remember that that was the punishment to which he himself had been condemned (*Fraser* I. D. p. 152). He is comforted with the thought that the fire burns, but does not consume: that it leads not to death, but life. Even human wisdom as represented in Virgil, so often tried and never found wanting, would counsel such a risk for the great gain beyond. For Geryon see *H* xvii. 91. We note the emphasized iteration of ll. 22, 31.

Forsake all fear, yea, every fear forsake ;  
 Turn thee to it, and enter free from care "  
 I stood, nor did as guide my conscience take  
 And when he saw me fixed and hard stand there,  
 A little vexed, he said, "Now look, my son,  
 This wall parts thee from Beatrice fair "  
 As Pyramus the name of Thisbe won  
 To ope his eyes in death and look on her,  
 Then when the mulberry grew vermilion,  
 So then, my hardness melted, did I stir  
 Myself to my wise Leader at the name  
 Which even in my mind wells full and clear  
 And then he shook his head, and speech thus came  
 "What ' would we hurt?" while on his face there played  
 A smile, as at a boy whom fruit doth tane.  
 Then to the fire he foremost went and prayed  
 That Statius, following me, would come the last,  
 For he till then long space between us made  
 When I reached it, I could myself have cast  
 In molten glass to cool mine agony,  
 Tho fire was there so measureless and vast  
 Then my sweet Father, as to comfort me,  
 Went on, of Beatrice speaking still,  
 Saying, "E'en now I see her eyes to see "  
 For guide we had a voice whose song did trill  
 From thence, and we, on it alone intent,  
 Came forth where rose the steep side of the hill

<sup>44</sup> We enter on the first of a series of self-revelations. Of all the sins to which he had yielded that from which he was now to be cleansed was the one he found it hardest to renounce. The conflict, the anguish seemed too terrible to bear.

<sup>45</sup> What conscience could not do was wrought by the name of Beatrice, as at once reviving the memories of the *Italia Nuova*, the first impressions of the boy of nine, and embodying in her transfiguration the image of celestial wisdom. The last sin the son that most easily beset him, must be conquered before he could gain that vision of beauty.

<sup>47</sup> For Pyramus and Thisbe see *Met.* iv. 55-166. It is hard for us, with Bottom the Weaver in our minds to understand how the story could affect a mind like Dante's. He however had no such associations. The legend ran that the fruit of the mulberry had before been white and changed to purple with the blood of the lovers.

<sup>46</sup> The comparison was a favourite one (C. xxiv. 108. *Comp.* C. xxxi. 12). It would be worth while to collect all Dante's studies of child life. *Comp.* C. xxxi. 64.

<sup>47</sup> The mortal Beatrice whom Dante remembered the transfigured Beatrice whom he identifies with Heavenly Wisdom are indissolubly blended but it indicates a somewhat prosaic cast of mind to see as many commentators do in the eyes of Beatrice nothing but the demonstrations of philosophy. Even the poet's allegorising analysis of his own verse (*Comp.* iv. 16) when the glow of inspiration had passed away is scarcely a sufficient authority for such a limitation. The flames efface, it would seem the last P from Dante's brow. The lust of the flesh is conquered and the purification is complete.

"*Venite, benedicti Patris,*" sent

That voice, from out a light so dazzling clear

My power to gaze was all o'erpowered and spent. 60

"The sun declines," it added, "eve is near,

Linger ye not, but hasten on your way,

While yet in western skies no dark appear "

The pathway through the rock straight upward lay,

In such direction that I east before 65

The shadow from the sun's now sinking ray,

And a few stairs our footsteps travelled o'er,

When by the shadow that had vanished quite

I and my sages knew how daylight woe

And ere, through all its fulness infinite, 70

The horizon gave but one unvaried line,

And all her gifts had been poured out by Night,

'Tach on a stair as bed ourselves we threw,

For the hill's nature showed itself of might

Our strength, not will, for climbing to subdue 75

As are the goats that on the mountain height,

Ere they are fed, full wild, and wanton bound,

Then, tame and still, to chew the cud delight,

Hushed in the shade, while all is glare around,

Watched by the shepherd, who upon his rod 80

Leans, and, so leaning, keeps them safe and sound,

And as the goatherd, outside his abode,

Doth by his slumbering flock his night-watch keep,

Guarding lest beast of prey should make inroad,

So were we three seen then in silence deep, 85

I as the goat, and eke as goatherds they

On either side hemmed in by craggy steep,

<sup>68</sup> The beatitude of *Matt.* xxv. 34 (we have passed beyond those of *Matt.* v.) comes from the lips of an angel of greater glory than any that have yet appeared.

<sup>73</sup> The coming on of nightfall, the weariness and sleep of the pilgrim while his companions remain watching, answer, if I mistake not, to the soul's need of rest after the great crisis of conversion. It was against the law of the Mountain to ascend by night. The spiritual ascent called for the open eye and the clear light of Heaven.

<sup>80</sup> The thought implied is that Dante alone felt the burning power of the fire. Virgil was beyond the reach of any purification. Statius had completed his purification in a lower circle (*C.* xx. 67), and needed nothing further. They therefore needed no repose, and could watch over their brother poet. It is noteworthy that Dante, with the words of *Matt.* xxv. 31-46 fresh in his memory, compares himself not to the sheep, but to the goat. We are reminded of the picture of the Good Shepherd in the Catacombs, in which He appears as bearing a goat upon His shoulder.

Little we saw of what beyond us lay,  
 But through that little I beheld each star,  
 Larger than is their wont, with brighter ray 90  
 Thus chowing thought's cud, seeing them afar,  
 Sleep fell on me, that sleep that knows full oft  
 Tidings of things to come ere yet they are  
 Then in that hour, I deem, when shone aloft  
 On the east hill-side Cytherea fair, 95  
 Who ever burns with fire of passion soft,  
 A lady young and comely saw I there  
 In that my dream, and gathering flowers she came  
 Through a green field, and thus sang sweetest air  
 "Know thou, whoe'er dost seek to know my name, 100  
 That I am Leah, and fair hands I ply  
 To make myself a garland with the same,  
 I deck myself that in the mirror I  
 May joy to gaze; my sister Rachel, she  
 All day unceasing doth her mirror eye 105  
 She those her beauteous eyes still longs to see,  
 As I with busy fingers to adorn,  
 Sight pleases her, and active working me"  
 And now, through brightness that precedes the morn,  
 Which shines more welcome on the pilgrims' head 110  
 As they repose them near their journey's bourn,

<sup>90</sup> The thought may have come from the description given by Marco Polo or other travellers of the stars as seen in the night of the tropics (see Humboldt, *Cosmos*, I, 200 n. ed. Bohm). That becomes a parable of the clearer vision of things heavenly found in the clearer light of a completed purity.

<sup>91</sup> The phrase is repeated from l. 76. The figurative use, "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancy" does not occur in any of Dante's favourite poets, but he may have derived it from Cic. *Att.* II, 12, 2, or August. *c. Iust.* vi, or any of the mediæval interpreters of *Lev.* xi, 3. Comp. C. xvi, 99.

<sup>92</sup> Comp. C. ix, 16-61, *H.* xxvi, 7. The hour, as seen in l. 95, was near dawn, when Cytherea (= Venus = the morning star) was seen in the eastern horizon. The mornning dream is, as in C. ix, 19-24, a prophecy rapidly to be fulfilled.

<sup>97</sup> Leah appears, not as she was at death, but in the beauty of her youth, in accordance with the thought of Aquinas that "*omnes resurgunt in aetate juvenili*" (*Summ.* II, 46, 9).

<sup>101</sup> In the symbolism of mediæval writers, specially prominent in Gregory I (*Magn. Mor.* vii, 28, *Hom.* 14 in *Ezek.*), Leah and Rachel were in the Old Testament, as Martha and Mary in the New Testament, symbols respectively of the life of action and of that of contemplation standing parallel to them, but on a somewhat higher level, are Matilda and Beatrice. Leah gathers flowers for her own blameless delight (as *v.* l. gives *piacere*, as though it were to please another, but has less authority), finds, i. e., her joy in the visible beauties of creation, and approximates to the contemplative life in the reflex consciousness of her joy (*Conv.* iv, 22, and *Kn.* in *M. P.* iii, 224). Rachel leaves the work of the Creator, and gazes evermore at her Mirror, which is God, in which she beholds her own nature glorified and transfigured.

<sup>108</sup> The eyes of Rachel are her thoughts, her ideas, and these she contemplates in the mirror, as the ideas, in the platonic sense, of God. The words admit, however, of the rendering "with her beauteous eyes."



On every side around the darkness fled,  
 And my sleep with it, wherefore I arose,  
 Seeing my great Masters risen from their bed.  
 "That sweetest fruit, for which man's craving goes 111  
 In search, on many a branch of many a tree,  
 This day thy hunger with full peace shall close"  
 Such words did Virgil, turning, speak to me,  
 And never were there gifts of worthiest fame  
 With which, like these, the soul well-pleased could be 120  
 Such longing upon longing on me came  
 To rise above, that each step of the way  
 I felt my wings grow to bear up my frame  
 And when the whole ascent below us lay,  
 And we stood where no step upmounteth higher, 125  
 Virgil on me his eyes intent did stay,  
 And said, "The temporal and the eternal fire  
 Thou hast beheld, my son, and hast attained  
 Where to see farther I may not aspire  
 To bring thee here my skill and art I've strained, 130  
 Now let thy pleasure take the true guide's place,  
 In steep paths, strait paths, thou'rt no more detained.  
 Behold the sun, which shines upon thy face;  
 See the green grass, the flowers, the tender trees,  
 Which this fair land brings forth itself to grace. 135  
 Until shall come, now bright with thoughts at ease,  
 The eyes which, weeping, led me thee to seek,  
 Thou mayst sit still or wander among these.

111 The "sweetest fruit" is none other than supreme good, the beatitude of the eternal life, which is now within the reach of the soul purified from the last trace of sensual evil. Men seek it on many trees, but it grows only in the Paradise of God (*Rev. ii. 7*, *C. xvi. 90*, *Conv. iv. 12*).

127 Virgil's prediction (*C. xii. 121*) was at last fulfilled. Comp. the expansion of the same thought in *Par. xviii. 53-63*.

128 We can scarcely fail to enter into Dante's thoughts as he parted mentally from the faithful companion of his ideal pilgrimage. Human wisdom had done its utmost in leading the pilgrim to the threshold of his home. The description of the scene finds its fulfilment in the earthly Paradise which Dante is about to enter. But it is also obviously symbolic in all its parts: the sun is the Divine Presence, the Sun of Righteousness; the flowers and trees are the creation as the work of God, seen once more, as Eden was seen, to be "very good" (*Gen. i. 31*). "Pleasure," which leads astray in things earthly, is here a safe guide, and the pilgrim may walk among them at his will.

138 The personal and symbolic elements are again blended. The eyes of Beatrice are those which had wept over Dante's fall; they are also divine truths, in which, as of old, in the eyes of the living maiden, he will find a greater joy than in any visible beauty.

Look not for me to signal or to speak;  
 Free, upright, healthy is thine own will now, 140  
 And not to do as it commands were weak,  
 So, crowned and mitred, o'er thyself rule thou "

### CANTO XXVIII.

*The Earthly Paradise—Matilda—The Two Rivers—Lethe and Eunoe*

EAGER, within it and around, each way  
 To search that heavenly forest dense and green,  
 That tempered to mine eyes the new-born day,  
 Waiting no more where I till then had been  
 Upon the bank, I went on slowly, slow, 5  
 O'er ground which fragrance breathed through all the scene,  
 And a sweet breeze towards me then did blow  
 With calm unvarying course upon my face,  
 Not with more force than gentlest wind doth show.  
 Thereat the leaves, set trembling all apace, 10  
 Bent themselves, one and all, towards the side  
 Where its first shade the Holy Hill doth trace,  
 Yet from the upright swerved they not aside  
 So far that any birds upon the spray  
 Ceased by their wonted taskwork to abide, 15

149 The most natural interpretation is that Dante now takes his place among those who are "kings and priests, unto God" (1 *Pet* ii 9. *Rev* i 6, v 10). Difficulties have been raised on the ground (1) that the mitre was used in the Roman ritual for the coronation of an emperor. Otho, e.g., is described as both *coronatus et mitratus* (Mabill. *Mus Ital* ii 401), and hence Scart. urges that both words refer to civil and not ecclesiastical functions. On the other hand, this may be traversed by the fact that the word *corona* was used as equivalent to *mitra* (*D C A s v Mitre*), so that both the words might refer to the Episcopate. On the whole, I adhere to what I have called the natural interpretation. I have had the suggestion that the image may have been suggested by the coronation of Henry VII. in the Church of St John Lateran on St Peter's Day, 1312. It is, at least, probable that Dante was present at it, and everything indicates that the closing Cantos of the *Purgatory* were written about this period. See *Life*, c 7, and Irmer, on the ritual of the Lateran coronation (p 80).

1-31 The three poets find themselves on the borders of the earthly Paradise. Of the locality of that Paradise as in the centre of a vast ocean, or the height of the Mountain of Cleansing, Dante's conception is absolutely unique. Medieval geographers placed it commonly in the far East, as in the Hereford *Mappa Munda* (p 22). Some, however, among them Brunetto Latini, fixed it in the north, Cosmos, beyond the ocean. Columbus, when he neared the mouth of the Orinoco, thought he was approaching it (Irving, *Columbus* x 4, Baring Gould, *Curious Myths*, pp 250-266). The picture of the heavenly forest stands out in marked contrast with that of the dreary

But, with full heart of joy, the breeze of day  
 They welcomed now within their leafy bower,  
 Which to their songs made music deep to play,  
 Like that which through the pine-wood runs each hour,  
 From branch to branch, upon Chiassi's shore, 20  
 When Æolus lets loose Sirocco's power.  
 Already had my slow steps led me o'er  
 Such space within the ancient wood, that I  
 Where I had entered now discerned no more,  
 And lo! to bar my progress, I descried 25  
 A river on the left, whose rippling stream  
 Bent down the grass that to its banks grew nigh  
 All waters here on earth men clearest deem  
 Would seem to have some turbid taint untrue,  
 Compared with that which nought to hide doth seem, 30  
 Even though it flows on, brown and brown in hue,  
 Beneath the eternal shade where never sun  
 Nor moon the darkness with their rays break through  
 My feet then halted, but mine eyes passed on  
 Beyond that little stream, that I might gaze 35  
 On the fresh varied mayblossoms one by one,  
 And then I saw—as one sees with amaze  
 A sight so sudden in bewilderment  
 That every other thought the shock doth daze—

wood of *Il 12*. Here all is bright, fair, fragrant. Dante was at least not the slave of what Ruskin describes (*Il P.* iii. c. 14) as the Italian dislike of forest scenery.

<sup>16</sup> I have, with *Scart* and others, taken the word as *ore*, as derived from the Latin *aura*, not as from *hora*. The latter would, of course, give "the early hours of day."

<sup>20</sup> The picture is drawn from the wide stretching pine-woods (now, for the most part, blasted) near Ravenna, which was Dante's home during the last two years of his life, and had probably been visited before he wrote the *Purgatory*. Chiassi (afterwards Chiassi) was the Latin name of a town, now vanished, which was in the 5th century the port of Ravenna. The soft musical whispering of the wind through the forest seems to have come to Dante's soul with a power to soothe which made it the fit type of the breeze of Purgatory. The Sirocco was the wind which blew from the south-east. The classical student may compare the description with that of the Grove of Colonus (*Soph.* *Ed. Col.* 15-18, 668-690).

<sup>25</sup> The river, as we see in l. 32, is Lethe, the river of forgetfulness, about which Dante had inquired in *Il xiv* 131-136. The idea is in part borrowed from classical mythology, but Dante gives it a new significance in limiting its action to the memory of past sins. In assuming that to be the blessing given to the purified soul, Dante, standing alone, as Æschylus did (*Agam.* 732) in his assertion of what he proclaimed as a divine law, separates himself even from the teaching of Aquinas, who held that the memory of sins remains even after repentance, though their burden and their guilt are gone (*Summ.* iii. *quæst.* 77. 1). What, we ask, was the symbolic meaning of the trees that overshadowed Lethe? Did it point to the law that it is in profound retirement that the soul finds its way to the peace in which its past evil is remembered no more? Was he writing out of the fulness of a personal experience?

A lady all alone, who, as she went,  
Sang evermore, and gathered flower on flower,  
With whose bright hues her path was all besprunt.  
"O lady sweet, whom rays of love have power  
To warm, if I may trust to look and glance,  
Which bear their witness of the hearts rich dower,  
O may it please thee," said I, "to advance  
To this fair border where I've ta'en my post,  
That I to hear thy song have better chance.

<sup>40</sup> The poet's dream of Ierh is fulfilled in the vision of the lady who now appears on the scene. It is not till C. xxxiii. 119 that we are told as it were incidentally that her name is Matilda. The question why that name is given to her leads us to out of the hardest problems of the *Commedia* on which many volumes have been written. I content myself here with a brief epitome.

<sup>1</sup> Matilda may be a purely ideal character representing the active as opposed to the contemplative life, answering to no historical personality. Those who adopt the theory that the Beatrice of the *Commedia* is also a purely imaginary person naturally take this view. They are however few in numbers and weak in arguments, the heretics of Dantian interpretation and may safely be disregarded. "*Securus judicat orbis terrarum*." I then theory, too even on their own showing, leaves the choice of the name Matilda unaccounted for.

<sup>2</sup> The consensus of almost all the earliest commentators, the primitive tradition of the Dante Church, identifies the Matilda of the *Purgatory* with the famous Countess who ruled over Loca, Parma, Reggio and Mantua the friend and ally of Gregory VII. in his warfare with the Empire the lady of Canossa who witnessed Henry IV.'s humiliation who closed her life by bequeathing her territories to the See of Rome (Milm. I. C. iv. 90-264). Contemporary writers speak of her as of a gracious beauty and cultivated mind filled in her endowments of chivalry and shrewdness. She seemed to the interpreters so fit to represent fully enough the active life of which the Matilda of the *Purgatory* is the symbol.

<sup>3</sup> On the other hand the theory presents serious difficulties. Would Dante the Ghibelline poet have thus immortalized one who was identified with the degradation of the Empire the usurper of the Papacy? He does not mention Gregory VII., why should he have given special honour to his ally? Would not her gift of territorial domains to the Papacy have seemed to him to stand out the more glaringly as that of Constantine? (*Il via* 115). Is there not a certain want of congruity in coupling together two personages so difficult in their position as the great Countess and one unknown to history like the daughter of Felice Portinari the wife of Simon de Jend?

<sup>4</sup> That doubt having suggested itself men began to look out for other Matildas more or less conspicuous and their claims have been urged by advocates who were confident that they had found the true solution of the problem. (a) The Empress Matilda, wife of Henry the Fowler. She was conspicuous alike for her beauty and her goodness considered to the sick and poor prepared that she dressed their wounds (Sermonetti and Crestini). She died at the age of thirty in 968. (b) St. Matilda of Hackeborn a Benedictine nun of the convent of Helfede near Bielefeld (*d* 1210). She wrote a work *De Spiritibus Sanctis* which contains though not sufficiently Dante like descriptions of Paradise, the vision of Col. and the like—to justify the inference that the poet may have read it (Lubin Boehmer). (c) Matilda, Beguine of Magdeburg (*d* 1200) who wrote a treatise on the effluent Light of the God-head, also more or less Dante like in thought with its visions of the pains of Hell and Purgatory of the Virgin and the Saints (Pregler). Special monographs over and above the notes in commentaries are found in the volumes of the *D. Gelehr.* by Barlow (ii. 331) Boehmer (iii. 101) Paquelin (iv. 10-12) Scartazzini (iv. 411).

I cannot bring myself to accept any of these hypotheses. It is questionable whether the fame or the works of the saintly ladies of Germany could have reached Dante at Verona or Lucca or Ravenna. Against (i) there is the special fact that it was no after Dante's manner to introduce into his *Commedia* persons who were living at the assumed date of his writing. It tells against all three that they do not correspond in their age or their ascetic life with the Matilda of the *Purgatory* that they do not stand on the same plane with Beatrice so as to be naturally associated with her. The resemblances of thought on which view is laid in the case of (b) and (c) are not more than might be found in any writer equally familiar with the mystical teachers of the age such as Bonaventura Richard or Hugh de St. Victor.

Scartazzini seems to me to have been on the right track the absence of the name notwithstanding in looking for Matilda within the circle of the friends of Beatrice mentioned in the *V. N.* There is a fitness in her being associated in the eternal life with one who had been her friend on earth which is lacking in all the other hypotheses. Here the two are emphatically on the same level, both in their mortal and immortal life. I cannot follow him, however, in the choice he has made from among the fair ones of the Beatrice circle. He

Thou bringest to my thoughts the pleasant coast  
 Where strayed Proserpine when by fatal chance, 50  
 Lost by her mother, she her spring flowers lost."  
 Then, as fair lady, moving in the dance,  
 Turns with her soles just lifted from the ground,  
 And scarcely one foot forward doth advance,  
 She among red and golden flowers turned round 55  
 To me, and with no other look she went  
 Than downcast eyes of maid with meekness crowned.  
 And now she gave my prayers their full content,  
 So drawing near me, that her song's sweet tone  
 Came to me, and I gathered what it meant. 60  
 Soon as she came where o'er the bank had grown  
 Plants with the waves of that fair river wet,  
 By special boon her eyes on me were thrown.  
 I do not deem such glorious light was set  
 Beneath the lids of Venus, when her son 65  
 Transfixed her as he never had done yet.

identifies Matilda with the lady of whom Dante tells us in the *V N* (c. 5) that he made her a "screen," addressing to her his sonnets and canzoni in order that he might conceal his consuming passion for the true object of his worship. I own that I cannot find in the poems addressed to that lady anything that is specifically appropriate enough to identify her with the Matilda of the *Purgatory*, and there is no evidence that she was dead in 1300, and I venture to suggest a different solution. If I may not dare to say *Furberia* where so many have uttered the same cry before me, I submit that the new hypothesis is a key that fits the lock, a theory that includes all the phenomena.

5 Early in the story of the *V N* Dante records the death of one who was very dear to his beloved one. He writes a sonnet (*V 2*) and a ballata (*B 2*) in her memory. He is certain that the Lord of Angels has taken her to His glory. He describes her as of "very gentle aspect," her "soul was gentle," her semblance "blithe and cheerful (*gaia leggiadria*). She was conspicuous for the love and courtesy which she showed to all. He had seen love incarnate in Beatrice weeping over her corpse. He had shed tears himself. As on the death of Beatrice he used the words of *Lam 1 1*, "How does the city sit solitary that was full of people!" so on that of her friend he wrote from *Lam 1 12*, "Behold and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow!" Here, it seems to me, is the very photograph of the Matilda we are in search of: she meets us in the *Purgatory*. What more natural than that Dante should transfigure the one friend to whom he had transfigured and glorified the other, that they should be to his idealising mind as the Martha and Mary, the Leah and Rachel, of the Biblical typology, that if in Beatrice, in the more sad and meditative by her friend's death, he saw the symbol of the wisdom which contemplates the Divine ideas, he should see in Matilda (I supply the missing link of name) the symbol of the more practical wisdom which delights in occupying itself with the works of the Creator? The two friends, "lovely and pleasant in their lives," were divided but a little while by death, and were found together in the Paradise of God, each with her special grace and characteristic charm.

30 The whole description is taken from *Met v 385-401*, which determines the sense of the *primavera*, which I have rendered "spring flowers."

"Collectis floribus iuniorum ceciderit remissis"

The word seems to have been used especially for the *marguerite* daisy, but in *Par xxx 63* it seems used, as here, for flowers generally. Comp *S 211*.

50 The colours are probably symbolic, "red" of love, and "golden" of purity.

60 The eyes of Matilda are hardly less bright than those of Beatrice. For the story of Venus wounded by Cupid see *Met x 525 et seq*.

Erect, she smiled the other bank upon,  
 Those fair flowers culling with her hands' swset art,  
 Which without seed that region high hath won.  
 By just thres paces did the stream us part, 70  
 But Hellespont, where Xerxes crossed its wave,  
 Still even now a curb for man's proud heart,  
 Ne'er from Leander suffered hate more grave,  
 "Twixt Sestos and Abydos flowing strong,  
 Than that from me, because no ford it gave. 75  
 "Ye are new come," so she began ere long,  
 "And maybe, seeing I in this place smile,  
 Chosen as homs to which man's race may throng,  
 This wondering springs from some distrust awhile,  
 But the psalm '*Delectasti*' pours its ray 80  
 To free thy mind from clouds that thee beguile.  
 And thou, who art in front, and me didst pray,  
 Speak if thou more wouldst hear, for I came nigh  
 Ready for every question, doubt to stay."  
 "This stream," I said, "and forest's melody, 85  
 Clash in my mind with that my new-born faith  
 In what I heard, of this the contrary."  
 Then, "I will tell thee how is wrought," she saith,  
 "By its fit cause what doth thy wonder move,  
 And clear the cloud that thee embarrasseth. 90  
 The Good Supreme, self-centred in its love,  
 Made man as good, and gave this place of bliss  
 As earnest of eternal peace above,

80 As in C xxvii 135 Comp *Mel* i 107, 108

*Ver erat æternum, placidique tepentibus auris,  
 Mulcebant l'ephyri natos sine semine flores*

70 The three steps may indicate the ordeals of shame (C xxx 76-78), confession (C xxxi 34-36), conversion (C xxxi 85-87), which have yet to be passed before Dante can be crowned. Comp *Herod* vii 54-56 for Xerxes passage of the Hellespont, and Ovid (*L.* xii, *Heroid* xvii) for the story of Leander.

71 The words refer not to Heaven, but the earth, Paradise, as chosen for the first home of man.

80 The reference to *Ps* xcii 4, singularly significant as pointing to Matilda as the symbol of the temper that delights in the creation (*factum*) of God and exults in the works of His hands, in whose thoughts those works are counted of high esteem (*magnificasti*), as contrasted with that of the unwise who do not know or understand them. Comp Ruskin, *M. P.* iii 14. The psalm occurs in the Saturday Service for Lauds. *Verses* 12, 13 have specially to be noted.

85 The doubt expressed rises out of the words of Statius in C xxi 43-54, that in the Mountain of Cleansing there was neither rain nor dew nor snow nor river.

91 The answer is found in the history of Paradise. It was to be the earnest of something better than itself, even of the "eternal peace." It was placed high above all atmospheric disturbances that rise from the lower earth. The uniform current that Dante now felt came (from the standpoint of the Ptolemaic system) from the revolution of the air, caused by that of the *Primum Mobile*, which communicated its motion to all the other spheres.

By his own fault here short abode was his ,  
     By his own fault, for weeping and dismay                   95  
     He honest laughter, pleasant mirth doth miss.  
 And that the stir wherein the vapours play,  
     That rise exhaling from the land and sea,  
     And follow upon heat far as they may,  
 May not on man discharge their enmity,                   100  
     This mountain rises up so high to heaven,  
     And from the point where it is barred is free  
 Now since the air in steady course is driven,  
     With the prime movement circling everywhere,  
     Unless the circle is at some point riven,                   105  
 Upon this summit, rising in pure air,  
     All free of contact, doth this motion smite,  
     And through the forest dense wakes murmurs rare  
 And smitten thus, the plants have wondrous might  
     With virtue rare the breeze to impregnate,                   110  
     And thus, revolving, scatters it aright ,  
 And yonder earth, according to its state,  
     Worthy in soil or climate, divers trees  
     Of diverse virtue then doth generate  
 Thou should'st not deem thine eye a wonder sees,                   115  
     This being heard, when any plant may grow,  
     And, without seed appearing, gain increase ,  
 And of this holy country thou shouldst know  
     It is, where thou art, full of every seed,  
     And fruit has in it gathered not below.                   120  
 The stream thou see'st doth not from source proceed  
     Renewed from vapour by the cold congealed,  
     Like river that or gains or loses speed,  
 But flows from fount that sure supply doth yield,  
     Which just so much regains by will of God                   125  
     As it sends forth, in twofold ways unscaled.

<sup>100</sup> The explanation is somewhat complicated, but the thought of the framework of the parable seems to be that the air impregnated with the seeds or seminal principles that are borne by the plants which grow in Paradise, comes thence to the inhalated earth, and that where they find the good ground they take root and bring forth fruit worthy of their origin. Below the surface there is the corresponding thought that all truth and goodness in man's present state is but the survival of his primal state, the remnants of a lost blessedness. "Aristotle," as South (i. 35) puts it, was "but the rubbish of an Adam."

<sup>120</sup> The nature of the river in its twofold currents, as Lethe and Eunoe, is next explained. Man must forget all past evil and remember only past good in order to return to the bliss of Eden.

On this side it descends, with power endowed,  
 Which takes from men the memory of their sin,  
 On that, recalls to men each deed of good.  
 So here it doth the name of Lethe win, 130  
 And Eunoe there, and till men both shall taste,  
 Will not to do its wondrous work begin.  
 All other savours are by this surpassed,  
 And though thy thirst e'en now be satisfied,  
 So that I need not more to show thee haste, 135  
 Yet give I free corollary beside;  
 Nor that my speech will prove less dear, I deem,  
 If beyond promise with thee it abide.  
 Those who of old indulged in poet's themo  
 Of golden age and its high happiness, 140  
 Of this land had perchance Parnassian dream,  
 Here innocence man's primal root did bless,  
 Here ever Spring and every fruit abound,  
 The nectar this which they to know profess."  
 And then I turned me, face and body, round 145  
 Upon my Bards, and saw that with a smile  
 They of those last words well had heard the sound;  
 Then to that lady fair I turned awhile.

## CANTO XXIX.

*The Apocalypse of Glory—The Seven Candlesticks—The Four-and Twenty  
 Elders—The Gryphon and the Chariot*

SINGING like lady fair whom love doth sway,  
 She carried on the close of her discourse—  
 "Quorum peccata tecta, blest are they."

<sup>130</sup> The words point to the description of the golden age in *Met.* i. 89 et seq., in which Dante finds a reminiscence or a dream of the Paradise of *Gen.* ii. The smile of the poets (there is an infinite pathos in the smile of Virgil) was one of recognition. They had found the reality of which before they had only dreamt.

<sup>1</sup> The opening lines, as indeed the description of Matilda in C. xxviii. 40-42, are almost an echo of a sonnet of Guido Cavalcanti, beginning

"In un boschetto trova pastorella"

There also the shepherdess walked alone in the wood, and--

"Cantava come fosse innamorata."

Assuming that the parallelism was not unconscious, there is something specially touching, it seems to me, in Dante's thus reproducing the thoughts of his early friend and transfiguring them with a new glory.

<sup>3</sup> *Ps.* xxix. (one of the Psalms for Matins on Tuesday in the Roman Breviary, as also one



And e'en as nympe who take their lonely course  
 Through forest glades, desiring, this to ehun, 5  
 And that to see, the full sun in his force,  
 So then against the stream her steps went on  
 Along the bank, and I, with equal pace,  
 Following her dainty footsteps one by one.  
 'Twixt us were not a hundred footsteps' space, 10  
 When both the banks with equal turn bent round,  
 So that towards the east I turned my face  
 Nor had we thus passed o'er much length of ground,  
 When that fair lady wholly turned to me,  
 And said, "My brother, look, and hear that sound." 15  
 And lo! a brightness shot all suddenly  
 On every side throughout the forest vast,  
 Such that I thought it lightning well might be,  
 But because lightning comes and then is past,  
 And this, continuing, brightened more and more, 20  
 "What then is this?" said I in thought at last.  
 And through the luminous air the breezes bore  
 Melodious sweetness, and a righteous zeal  
 Made me the hardihood of Eve deplore,

of the Seven Penitential Psalms) rightly follows on *Ps* xcu, as indicating the necessary condition of the joy of which the latter is the utterance. The soul that is laden with the burden of its sins cannot rightly delight in the handiwork of the Creator. So in *Ps* xxxiii itself the beatitude of the penitent ends in the joy and gladness of the pardoned.

<sup>4</sup> As in *C* xxviii 40, the poet seems to strive at reproducing all that he had ever seen in the old days at Florence, when, it may be, he had known the real Matilda, of womanly grace and dignity. Is it too much to conjecture that the picture is a reminiscence, floating before the mind's eye, of a gathering of some of the sixty fair ones of the *V. N.* (c. 6) in Vallombrosa? Did he remember how he and she had walked on either side the stream of the Acqu' Bella, which flows through it, as they were doing now in the cloudland of his vision on either side of Lethe?

<sup>15</sup> The term 'brother' is applied to Dante too often in the *Purgatory* by other spirits (*C* iv 127, xi 82, xiii 94, *et al.*) to allow us to lay much stress on it, but it surely falls in better with the theory of old acquaintance than with the hypothesis that the speaker is a counsellor, an empress, or an abbess.

<sup>16</sup> We enter on a new region of the veer vision, obviously the outcome of his studies of those of Ezekiel and St John, as other parts of the poem had been of his studies of Virgil, Ovid, Lucan, Statius. In the grand old form of *Crete* (*II* xiv 103) we find, as it were, a prelude to later apocalyptic studies. And as before, studies lead to imitation—I had almost said to rivalry. He matches his own strength with that of the veers of Chebar and Patmos, as he had done with that of the poets of the Roman empire. But the work is not that of a mere imitator. It is truer to say that the studies of the poet bring before him new images and new thoughts, and that these, in the hour of vision, which in his case was often literally ecstatic, combined themselves, almost without the exercise of will, in his imagination. Much of what follows was seen by him, if I mistake not, as we see things, in a dream, though it afterwards passed through the crucible of the theologian and was fashioned by the graving-tool of the supreme artist.

The vision begins, like that of *Ezek* i 4-14, with a brightness as of lightning, but not, like lightning, evanescent. The whole forest is illuminated.

<sup>22</sup> The melody is the distant sound of the hymn of l. 85.

<sup>24, 31</sup> In dwelling on the sin of Eve rather than on that of Adam (but see *C*. xxxii 37), Dante follows Aquinas (*Summ* ii 2, 163 4), as he follows St Paul (*I Tim* ii 14). All heaven

Who, while the heavens and earth obedient wheel, 25  
     A woman, by herself, but newly made,  
     Could not endure a veil should aught conceal ;  
 Beneath which veil had she devoutly stayed,  
     Full well might I those joys ineffable  
     Long since, and through long ages, mine have made 30  
 And, as my steps among such first-fruits fell  
     Of joys eternal, all my soul amazed,  
     And eager still the sum of joys to swell,  
 Before us, like a fire that brightly blazed,  
     The whole air glowed beneath the branches green, 35  
     And the sweet sound to song distinct was raised.  
 O holy virgins, if or hunger keen  
     Or cold night watch for you were borne by me,  
     Strong cause have I my wage to claim, I ween.  
 Now is it meet that Helicon more free 40  
     For me should flow, Urania lend her song,  
     Things hard for thought, to clothe in poesy  
 A little farther on, through distance long  
     That lay between our feet and where they were,  
     Seven trees of gold mocked us with semblance wrong, 45  
 But when I came so near that what they share  
     In common, and so cheat the erring sense,  
     Lost not through distance any mark it bare,

and earth were setting in example of obedience. She alone disobeyed winning a Lucifer was said to have sinned on the first day of her creation in her impatience of the veil which came between her and a knowledge which was not good (*Gen* iii 5 6). Had she accepted that veil she would have entered into all the joys of Eden for a long life and there would have been for her descendants but the *primitivæ*, the first fruits of life eternal. Belief outward framework thence has the thought that man accepting the limitations of his knowledge, may attain to a vision of divine things of which the attempt to transcend those limitations by disobedience, eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil will only deprive him.

<sup>37</sup> Invocations of the Muses were an inheritance from classical poetry (*C* i 8 *H* ii 7). Here stress is laid on Urania the Muse of heavenly poetry as giving the required help Comp. Milton's 'Descend from Heaven, Urania' (*P* i vii 1).

<sup>38</sup> The words speak of the night watches of the student, the vigils and the fasts which had endangered health and enfeebled sight (*Don* iii 1 9, *V* i c 23). So Milton had 'outwatched the Bear, and lost his sight in the service of his country and the Muse

<sup>42-50</sup> *Albero* may be either a tree or the mast of a ship. I prefer the former. *Mark* viii 24 may have been in Dante's mind. As the vision approaches the *seminus* trees are seen to be seven candlesticks, the *candelabra* of the vision of *Jer* i 12. Here they stand for the seven Churches of Asia: here, in their combination with the four and twenty elders and the four living creatures of *Rev* iv 4 and 6, they are probably symbols like the seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, of the seven spirits of God *1 e.*, of the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit (*1 Cor* xii 2), all the three symbolism coming from the seven branched candlestick— itself probably a symbol of the tree of life—of *Exod* xxv 37. This seems a more natural interpretation than that of Peter Dante, that the candelabra represent the seven orders of the Church's ministry, or the seven sections of the second paragraph of the Apostles' Creed. The son (if the *Commentary* be indeed his) does not seem either in this instance, or in others, to be a true interpreter of his father's mind.

The power which feeds the mind's intelligence,  
 Perceived that they seven candelabra were, 20  
 And that the strain "*Hosanna* !" floated thence.  
 Above them flamed their goodly order fair,  
 More clear than is the moon in sky serene,  
 In her mid month and in the midnight air.  
 Then, full of wonder great at what was seen, 25  
 I to good Virgil turned, and he replied,  
 With face as much amazed as mine had been.  
 Then back I looked, and those high wonders eyed,  
 Which moved towards us so exceeding slow,  
 That they outstripped had been by new-made bride. 30  
 The lady chid me "Why this eager glow  
 Only for those clear lamps of living light,  
 And look'st thou not at what behind doth go?"  
 And then I saw a troop arrayed in white  
 Come after these, as guides that led them on, 35  
 And never whiteness here was seen so bright.  
 On my left flank the stream in glory shone,  
 And my left side it mirrored back again,  
 If I looked on it, as a glass had done.  
 When on my bank I did such post attain 40  
 That now the river only did us part,  
 For better view I did my steps refrain,  
 And I beheld the flamelets forward start,  
 And o'er the air behind their colours shed;  
 Like pennons seemed they, floating each apart, 45

<sup>21</sup> The voice which cries *Hosanna* ('Save!') but passing into the more general sense of "Hail!" *Ps* cxviii 25, 26, *Matt* xxi 9, *et al*), comes from the four-and-twenty elders.

<sup>22</sup> I have chosen "order" as the best equivalent for *arnese*, from German *harnisch*, and so passing through the senses of "harness," "armour," and "equipment" generally.

<sup>23</sup> The wonderful vision is as mysterious to Virgil as it was to Dante. His wisdom has reached the end of its tether.

<sup>24</sup> The slowness of the procession may be only an accident of the description, part of its dignity and majesty, as it would be in like procession upon earth, e.g., that of the *carroccio* or battle-car of Italian cities. It may also symbolize the slowness of the growth and evolution of spiritual gifts in their manifestation to the world.

<sup>25</sup> Matilda directs the veer's attention to a yet greater wonder. The impersonal graces of the Spirit are less marvellous than their revealed human embodiments, the company of white-robed ones (*Rev* iv 4) who follow the seven candlesticks.

<sup>26</sup> At the risk of falling into the subtlety which is the besetting sin of commentators, I venture to think that we may read between the lines the thought that Lethe, the symbol of the ultimate forgetfulness of evil, the conscience purified from sin, becomes, when illumined by the Divine light of revealed truth, a mirror in which a man beholds himself, his weakness and infirmities (Dante sees his *left* side), as he had never seen them before.

<sup>27</sup> The MSS. give for the most part *pennelli*. Some editors adopt *panelli*. The latter word would give the meaning of a torch, a flambeau, the former has the two meanings of (1) a

So that the air was still marked overhead  
 With seven broad bands, the same as those in hue  
 Whence the sun's bow and Delia's zone are made.  
 The streamers rearward stretched beyond view,  
 And far as I could distance estimate, 80  
 Ten paces came between the farthest two.  
 Under a heaven thus fair as I narrate  
 Did four-and-twenty elders slowly move,  
 In pairs, with fleur-de-lys incoionate,  
 And they all sang, "Oh, blessed thou above 85  
 All Adam's daughters, blessed too for aye  
 Be all thy glorious beauties that we love!"  
 And, when the flowers and other verdure gay,  
 That on the other bank grew opposite,  
 Of those elect ones no more felt the sway, 90  
 As in the heaven there follows light on light,  
 Four living creatures after them drew nigh,  
 Each wearing crown of leafage green and bright.

painter's brush or pencil indicating the peocilled track of the flame of the candlestick, or (2) a pennon or streamer, such as floats on the mast of a ship. Of these, I 79 seems in favour of (2).

77 We note the artist-poet in the symbolism. Each gift of the Spirit has its appropriate colour, seen in its effluence and effect. Together yet distinct, they form the rainbow or the lunar halo (Delia = Diana), such as St. John saw round about the Throne (*Rev.* iv 3) and those spiritual gifts stretch beyond the seen. He cannot measure the extent of their manifestations.

81 The ten steps can hardly stand, as some have taken them for the ten commandments, but *Cont.* ii 15 shows that the number was for Dante full of a mystical significance.

83 The twenty-four elders of *Rev.* iv 4 are probably the twelve Patriarchs and the twelve Apostles, as representing the Churches of the Old and New Covenants. The *consensus* of commentators, however, is, I believe, right in taking Dante's elders as the twenty-four books of the Old Testament, reckoned by the Jews, and by Jerome in his Preface (*Prolog. Gal.*) to the Vulgate, who indeed expressly identifies those books with the elders of *Rev.* iv 4. That Preface had become the basis of a traditional belief, and Dante had probably read it in every MS. of the Vulgate with which he came in contact. This is, indeed, the exegesis of St. John's symbolism adopted by not a few writers whom Dante was likely to have studied—Victorinus, Bede, and perhaps also the Abbot Jossehim (*Par.* xv 140).

84 The *fiordaliso* of the Italian is identified in C. xx 86 with the *fleur-de-lys*, the *fleur-de-louis*, the flower of the kings of France, traditionally derived from St. Clotilda, the daughter of Clovis but first emblazoned on the banner of France by Louis VII in 1137 (C. xx 86). That flower is, without doubt, the *lys*, and that does not furnish any special symbolism. Probably Dante, like a crowd of later writers, took the *fleur-de-lys* for a lily, the white Annunciation lily of the Madonna, such as painter's place in the hands of Gabriel (see Folkard's *Plant Lore* pp. 347-387). So taken, the lily-crown, emblem of virgin purity, fit in well with the song of the elders.

86 From our own religious standpoint we wonder at the testimony of the elders being given not to the Christ, but to the Virgin Mother. We must remember, however, (1) that the word "Hosanna" has already met us as expressive of the adoration of Christ, and (2) that what startles us would seem natural enough to the student of St. Bernard and St. Bonaventura. The idea that the words are spoken of the transfigured, ideal Beatrice though adopted by many critics (*Phil.* among them), does not seem to me to commend itself. (a) The words are distinctly a paraphrase of *Luke* i 47. (b) The absence of the Virgin from the mystic vision would be startlingly at variance with Dante's profound devotion to her, as in *II* ii 94, *Par.* xxxi 116, xxxii 85-114, xxxiii 1-39. (c) Beatrice is adequately glorified hereafter.

87 The four living creatures are identified (I 100) with those of the vision of *Luke* i 4 14,

Plumed with six wings were all that company ;  
 Of eyes their plumes were full, and Argus' eyes, 85  
 Were they yet living, might with those eyes vie.  
 To tell their forms no rhymes my store supplies,  
 O Reader, for new wants bring new constraint,  
 So that in this I must economise.  
 But in Ezekiel read how he doth paint 100  
 What he saw coming from the region cold,  
 With wind, and cloud, and fire together blent,  
 And, as thou'lt find them in his pages old,  
 So were they there, except that as to wings,  
 St. John with me, and not with him doth hold. 105  
 The space within the four a car enrings,  
 That on two wheels in triumph moveth on,  
 Which harnessed to his neck a Gryphon brings.

*Rev* iv 6-8, with the faces respectively of a man, a lion, an ox, and an eagle. In the traditional interpretation of the Middle Ages these were symbols of the four Evangelists (Greg. M. *Hom.* iv in *Eucl.* f. 258, ed. Paris 1521), and the hymn of Adam of St. Victor (Trench. *Sacred Lat. Poetry*, p. 57, *Opp. Rich. & S. Vict.* leg. xxx p. 1515 ed. Migne). Art had brought that interpretation into prominence in every part of Christendom and it can scarcely be doubted that Dante adopted that symbolism. The green wreaths with which they are crowned are symbols at once of hope and victory. As in *Rev.* iv 8 (l. 104), Dante gives them six wings, and the wings are full of eyes, that seem in their threefold duality to represent the vision of past, present, future—the *Aspice*, *Aspice*, *Aspice*, *Prospect* of St. Bernard.

<sup>107</sup> The chariot does not appear by name in the vision of Ezekiel, but has a basis in the wheels of that vision, and in the use of the chariot in *Ps.* civ. 3 *Isa.* xix. 1 as one with the throne of God who dwells between the Cherubim. In Dante's vision it stands without doubt for the visible Church of God, which he, from his standpoint and for his own age, identified with that of Latin Christendom. The two wheels of the chariot have been interpreted as the active and the contemplative life as the Old and New Testament, as the Jewish and the Christian Church, as justice and mercy, as the priesthood and the laity. Dante, however, may be allowed to be his own interpreter, and he, in *Par.* xii. 106, identifies the two wheels with St. Dominic and St. Francis as types respectively of the knowledge and the love by which alone the Church advances on its triumphant course, and which find from age to age, different representatives. The *carroccio* of Italian cities, the chariot which was the symbol of the state, lent itself naturally to such a symbolism.

<sup>108</sup> I adopt without hesitation the general view of interpreters that the Gryphon stands for Christ in His divine and human natures, but the question how Dante was led to that symbol, with what associations it was connected in his own mind and that of his readers, has yet to be answered, and its genesis is so eminently characteristic of the confluence of the classical and mediæval, the Pagan and the Christian elements in Dante's mind, that it will be worth while to attempt to solve the problem. Herodotus (iii. 16) seems to have been the first to bring to the Greeks the tale of the one-eyed Annasians among the people of the far North, and of the gryphons who were the guardians of the sacred gold there. The tale passed on from age to age and reappeared though classed as fabulous, in Virgil (*Æt.* viii. 27) and in Pliny (*N. H.* vii. 2, x. 49). The gryphons are described more definitely as combining the body of a lion with the head and wings of an eagle as here in l. 108. They were connected with the worship of Apollo, and the chariot of the sun god was represented as drawn by a gryphon (Claud. *In vi. Cons. Hon.* v. 30), which was said to represent the earthly element in Apollo's nature. So far the thought was ready to Dante's hand. The belief in the gryphons as lion eagles grew stronger in the dark ages. They appear in the order of Seville's *Origines* (xv. 3, 32) in the Hereford *Mappe-Monde* (p. 61), in heraldic blazons, in names like Griffin, Greifenheim, Greifenhahn, and the like (Fott. *Fam. Nam.* p. 275), in travels like those of Maundeville (c. 26) and Marco Polo (*Yule*, ii. 349-354). So far we have a reason for Dante's choice. He wanted a mystic animal for his mystic chariot, and he found one in the gryphon. But for him it had a new significance. Dan. vii. 4 had presented the lion eagle form as the symbol of a mighty kingdom. Both the lion and the eagle were found separately in the four living creatures of Ezekiel and St. John and in the received symbolism of the Church, as in the hymn of Adam of St. Victor already quoted, the

And his two wings, on this and that side one,  
 Are stretched midway, three bands on either side, 110  
 So that by cleaving he wrought harm to none.  
 In vain the eye their height to follow tried,  
 So far as he was bird, all gold his frame,  
 And white the rest, with vermeil modified.  
 Not merely never car so glorious came 115  
 In Rome for Scipio's or Augustus' joy,  
 But e'en the sun's to it were poor in fame—  
 The sun's, which swerving, fire must needs destroy,  
 When Earth in prayer made her devout appeal,  
 And Jovo his secret justice did employ. 120  
 Three maidens on the right, around the wheel,  
 Came dancing, one of them so fiery red,  
 Background of flame would scarce her form reveal,  
 The second, as if she were fashioned,  
 Both flesh and bones, of emerald bright and green; 125  
 The third, like snow but newly scatterèd  
 Now by the white one they led on were seen,  
 Now by the red, and at the latter's song  
 They moved, or quick, or with sedater mien.  
 Upon the left four made a festal throng, 130  
 All clothed in purple, following as their guide  
 One of themselves to whom three eyes belong

eagle was assigned to St. John because he set forth the glory of the Eternal Son, the lion to St. Mark as representing the risen Christ. Ludore (*Orig.* iv 7, c. 2) had anticipated Dante in seeing in the lion the symbol of the humanity of Christ, in the eagle that of His divinity, and so the confluence of traditions from widely different sources was complete (Bahr, *Symb.* i 350).

109-111 The thought seems to be that the wings of the eagle, i.e., the working of the Divine nature of the risen Lord, co-operated harmoniously with the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit in ways beyond human ken, as the wings themselves stretched beyond the veer's gaze.

113 Gold, as in the Holy of holies, was the symbol of Divine holiness (Bahr, *Symb.* i 272). The other colours come from the "white and ruddy" of *Song of Sol.* v 10, and are mystically interpreted as those of human purity and love.

115 The classical allusions are (1) to the triumph of Scipio Africanus after the battle of Zama, (2) to that of Augustus (*A.P.* viii 714), (3) to the chariot of the sun as described in *Met.* ii 107-110. The lines that follow refer to the Phæthon mythos, when the Earth goddess prayed Jupiter to protect her from the peril brought about by the driving of the young charioteer (*Met.* ii 278-300). There may be an allusion, to be read between the lines, to any, whether a Boniface or a Philip, who should usurp the place of the supreme ruler of both Church and Empire.

121 The three maidens are the three theological virtues, Faith in the whiteness of purity, Hope in the emerald of the ever budding freshness, Love in the burning glow of charity (Bahr, *Symb.* i 316-340). The lines that follow indicate the spiritual truth that now faith is the source of hope and love, now again love of faith and hope, the intensity of love determining the activities of the other two.

130 The four maidens on the left of the chariot are the four cardinal virtues (natural, as distinguished from the three just described), not of the Aristotelian but of Platonic ethics, Justice, Courage, Temperance, and Prudence (*Purg.* i 23). They are clothed in purple, the rich

And on this group close following I descried  
 Two aged men in different garb arrayed,  
 But like in mien, each grave and dignified. 185  
 And one the habits of the tribe displayed  
 Who own as master great Hippocrates,  
 Whom Nature for her dearest creatures made ;  
 The second showed far other thoughts than these,  
 With sword that was so sharp and lucent seen, 190  
 That e'en across the stream fear marred my ease.  
 Then four I looked on, all of humble mien,  
 And behind all an aged man did tread  
 Alone, asleep, yet with a face full keen.  
 And all these seven were so apparellèd 195  
 As that first group, yet not with lilies they  
 Around their heads for wreaths were garlanded,  
 But roses and all flowers with vermeil gay ;  
 At some small distance sight might well have sworn  
 That flames above the brows of each did play, 200  
 And as the car in front of me was borne,  
 Thunder was heard, and then that worthy band  
 Seemed as if onward step must be forborne,  
 And with the former ensigns took their stand

crimson of regal robes (*Matt* xxvii 28, *Mark* xv 17), as the emblem of their sovran excellence (Bahr, *ut sup*). The three eyes are once more as the *Respicere, Aspicere, Prospicere* of St Bernard. Comp *Conv* iv 27, where we read that prudence implies memory of the past, knowledge of the present, and foresight of the future.

134-141 The two elders are St Luke and St Paul. The former is chosen as being the patron saint of the art in which Dante had enrolled himself, perhaps too as being, in Church tradition, the patron also of painters, among whom Dante claimed a place (*P. N.* c 35). The sword was the received emblem of St Paul, partly as recalling the manner of his martyrdom, partly as the emblem of the "word of the Spirit" (*Eph* vi 17, *Heb* iv 12). Carrying on the idea of the canon of Scripture, the two forms may represent the Acts and the Pauline Epistles. For Hippocrates, comp *H* iv 143.

142 The four elders that follow are less easy to identify. (1) Some have found in them the writers of the Catholic epistles, (2) others, again the four greater prophets, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, (3) others, again, the four doctors of the Latin Church, Gregory the Great, Jerome, Ambrose, and Augustine, or (4) the four early popes, Sixtus, Pius, Callistus, and Urban, named in *Par* xxvii 43, 44. I incline, on the whole, to (1) as the most probable, the red roses and other flowers being the symbols of their burning charity.

143 The aged man who walks sleeping and alone is identified by one commentator (*Ott*) with Moses, by most others with St John in his character as the seer of the Apocalypse, closing the whole mystical procession, the closed eyes indicating the sleep of ecstasy.

144 The thunder comes, as in *Rev* vi 1, x 3, as the sign of supernatural revelation, and then the procession halts till Dante has passed through his final act of confession and penitence, and is taken (*C* xxxi. 100-112) to the breast of the Gryphon Christ.

Dürer (*Christ Iconogr* 1 315, Millington's transl. quoted in Longfellow's *Dante*) gives a striking description of a stained-glass window in the Church of Notre Dame de Brou, representing the triumph of Christ, in many ways resembling that of this Canto, but with some striking differences, chiefly that the car is drawn, not by the gryphon, but by the four living creatures who represent the Gospels. Dürer, it may be noted, takes the gryphon as the symbol, not of Christ, but of the Pope, a view which seems to me untenable, as turning the Ghibelline poet, the author of the *De Monarchia*, into a thorough paced Ultramontanist.

## CANTO XXX.

*The Epiphany of Beatrice—The Vanishing of Virgil—The Tears of  
Penitence—Beatrice as Accuser*

WHEN the septentrion of the primal heaven,—  
Which never knew its setting or its rise,  
Nor other cloud but that by man's sin driven,  
And did each one that looked on it apprise  
Of duty, as the lower gives to view  
How best to steer to where the haven lies,—  
Stood still awhile, then all that people true  
That 'twixt it and the Gryphon first drew near,  
Turned to the car, as though their peace they knew  
And one of them, as if by Heaven sent there,  
Sang, "*Veni, Sponsa, come from Lebanon!*"  
Three times, and all the rest took up the air.  
As at the last call every blessed one  
Shall quickly from his cavern-tomb return,  
And "*Alleluas*" sing with voice re-won,  
So where the car divine was onward borne  
A hundred rose *ad vocem tanti semis*,  
Angels and heralds of the life eterne,  
And all said "*Benedictus es qui venis,*"  
And, scattering flowers above them and around,  
"*Manibus O date lilia plenis!*"

<sup>1</sup> The Septentrion the *Ursa Major* of the primal heaven, is found in the seven gifts of the Spirit, symbolised in the seven caudal bra. These as eternal in their essence, knew no rising or setting. No cloud obscured them but the sin which hindered men from seeing them.

<sup>9</sup> The Apostles and Prophets, the writers of the books of the Old Testament and New Testament, looked to Christ and His Church as the source of the true peace.

<sup>10</sup> The voice may be that of Solomon, as the writer of the Song of Songs, or the song itself personified. The words of *Song Sol* iv. 8 had often been applied to the Church, notably by St. Bernard (*In Cant* 24, 25), as the Spouse of Christ. Dante is bold enough to apply them to the transfigured Beatrice, as the impersonation of heavenly wisdom, the type also of a glorified womanhood. *Prov* viii and *Wisd* vii may have seemed to him to justify the transfer.

<sup>11</sup> *A v l* gives *alleluando* = lifting up their voice instead of *alleluando* another *carne* instead of *voce*, but the authority of MSS is with the readings which I have followed.

<sup>12</sup> Who are the "hundred spoken of? Angels as in line 28 B., or prophets or the preachers of the Church. Perhaps we ask not wisely for an over-detailed interpretation.

<sup>13</sup> The cry raised is that with which the Christ was received on his entry into Jerusalem. They are referred by some commentators to Beatrice the masculine *Benedictus* notwithstanding, by some to Dante himself. It seems better to take them in their primary application, Christ being thought of as sharing in the triumph of His Church and the manifestation of the Divine Wisdom (*Ep* iii. 9, 10).

<sup>14</sup> The quotation from *Æn* vi. 864 is applied in a way that contrasts strangely with its use



Oft have I seen how all the east was crowned  
 At very break of day with roseate hue,  
 And all the sky beside serener found,  
 And the sun's face o'erclouded came in view, 25  
 The vapours so attempering its powers,  
 That the eye gazed long while, nor weary grew :  
 And so, enveloped in a cloud of flowers,  
 Which leapt up, scattered by angelic hands,  
 And part within and part without sent showers, 30  
 Clad in white veil with olive-wreathed bands,  
 A lady in a mantle bright and green  
 O'er robe of fiery glow before me stands.  
 And then my spirit, which so long had been  
 Without the wonder that had once dismayed, 35  
 When that dear presence by mine eyes was seen,  
 Though nothing more to vision was displayed,  
 Through secret power that passed from her to me  
 The mighty spell of ancient love obeyed.  
 Soon as I stricken stood, in act to see, 40  
 By that high power that pierced me with his dart  
 Ere yet I passed from out my boyhood free,  
 I to the left with wistful look did start,  
 As when an infant seeks his mother's breast,  
 When fear or anguish vex his troubled heart, 45

by Virgil. There the flowers are floral offerings for the tomb of the dead Marcellus. Here they greet Beatrice as the bride from Lebanon, and are scattered by the hands of the angels, whose presence was perhaps implied in l. 17. And yet perhaps there mingled with the new symbolism some memories of the time when he had seen him scattered on the grave of Beatrice, as its starting point, and had then heard the *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*.

<sup>25</sup> We enter on what we might almost describe as the apotheosis of Beatrice. To us it seems strange and startling, but the 13th century was familiar not only with the cultus of the Virgin Mother, with all its tendencies to develop the adoration of what Goethe has called the "ever feminine" element in man's life, but also with something like an apotheosis of St. Francis, and with the feminine impersonations of his distinctive attributes. Those who remember the Marriage with Poverty or the Tower of Chastity in the frescoes at Assisi will not wonder that Dante (who was probably with Giotto when he painted them) should have sought to immortalise the memory of one who had been to him the type of purest wisdom with something of the same honour. And after all, the prove of the *V. N.* had all but anticipated the poetry of the *Commedia*. There Beatrice was "the queen of all virtues" (c. 10). Heaven calls for her presence (c. 19). When she died she was taken to share the glory of the Queen of Heaven (c. 29). Here, at all events, if anywhere, we need to remember Ruskin's dictum that Dante saw, but did not invent, the things which he describes (note on *H. XII* 76). The colours of the garments are those often combined in early Italian paintings of the Madonna of the 13th century, and are symbolical—the white of the purity of faith, the green of the freshness of hope, the crimson of the glow of love. In the *V. N.* Beatrice appears sometimes in crimson, sometimes in white, but green is absent (Bähr, *Symb.* 1 316-340).

<sup>34</sup> The new meeting recalls the mingled emotions of the old, the pulse beating, head swimming, strength collapsing (*V. N.* c. 2). So it had been when he was nine, so it was when he was thirty five, the ideal date of the poem, so it was also, we may believe, when he wrote the *Purgatorio* in 1314 (?). The poet's soul, like that of the Psalmist, is "as a weaned child" (*Ps.* cxxxii. 2).

To say to Virgil : " Trembling, fear-oppress'd,  
Is every drop of blood in every vein,  
I know that old flame's tokens manifest "

But Virgil then had left me to my pain,  
Virgil, my sweetest father, to whose hand, 50  
Virgil's, I gave myself, true health to gain :  
Not all from which our mother great was banned  
Availed, though now my cheeks with dew had grown  
All cleansed, the tears that stained them to command.

" Dante, weep not because thy Virgil's gone , 55  
Weep not as yet ; as yet weep thou no more ;  
For other sword-wounds must thy tears flow down ."  
As when an admiral from stern looks o'er,  
Or prow, the crowd that other ships doth man,  
And gives them nobler courage than before, 60  
There, where the left rim of the chariot ran,  
When at the sound of mine own name I turned,  
Which here perforce recorded men must scan,  
I saw the lady, whom I erst discerned  
Veiled underneath the angelic festal show, 65  
Beyond the stream with eyes that on me yearned,  
Although the veil that from her head did flow,  
By the leaves circled to Minerva dear,  
Allowed no glimpse of that which lay below,

<sup>48</sup> The last words addressed to Virgil are pre-eminently Virgilian (*Æn.* iv. 23), "*Agnosco  
lætæris et castigat flammæ*"

<sup>49</sup> And so the pilgrim parts from the friend and companion and guide of past years and turns from human to divine wisdom. There was a wrench to the natural mind in parting with what had been the joy and strength of his life, even though it was to enter into a higher blessedness. We read between the lines what has been the experience of thousands who, having found many goodly pearls, part with the chiefest and best for the one pearl of great price. There is great joy in the exchange, but not in the new-found delights (*Par.* l. iii. c. iii. st. 1). The tears at parting with what has before been the stay and consolation of the pilgrim life. The eclogues that passed between Dante and Joannes de Virgilio in the last two years of the former's life show that he did not abandon the study of his master's works. The pilgrim of the furrow left the threefold iteration of the name as its starting point in the like iteration of Eurydice in *Georg.* iv. 524-527.

<sup>50</sup> Noticable as being the one solitary instance, with the possible exception of *Par.* xxvi. 104, in which the poet brings in his own name. Beatrice, as the symbol of the transfigured conscience of humanity, speaks to the baptismal name which was the symbol of his spiritual personality. Line 63 contains the *apologia* for what might look like egotism. We are reminded of the rare occasion on which the great Master addressed His disciples by their name (*Matt.* xvi. 17, *Luke* xxii. 31, *John* xiv. 9, xxi. 15).

<sup>51</sup> Possibly a reminiscence, like that of *H.* xxi. 7, of what had been seen at Venice.

<sup>52</sup> It will be remembered that the four cardinal or natural virtues were on the left side of the Christ, to which Dante now turns.

<sup>53</sup> The "festal show" was the cloud of flowers from angelic hands described in l. 28.

<sup>54</sup> The olive crown of l. 31 is identified with the wreath of Minerva, and points to Beatrice as the representative of Celestial Wisdom.

Queen-like in look and gesture, yet severe, 70  
 She then resumed as one whose speech flows free,  
 Yet keeps behind a speech more hard to bear :  
 "Behold ! in me thy Beatrice see :  
 How didst thou deem thee fit to climb the hill ?  
 Didst thou not know that here the blessed be ?" 75  
 Mine eyes then fell upon the waters still,  
 But there myself beholding, to the grass  
 I turned, such shame upon my brow weighed ill.  
 As mother to her son for proud doth pass,  
 So she to me, for with a bitter twang 80  
 Tastes pity which in sternness doth o'erpass.  
 She held her peace, and from the angels rang  
 " *In te speravi, Domine,*" but they  
 No farther than the "*pedes meos*" sang  
 E'en as the snows that on the tall trees lay, 85  
 Along Italia's backbone are congealed,  
 Swept on and bound as winds Slavonian play,  
 Then trickling flow, the whole vast mass unsealed,  
 At the mere breath of blast from shadeless clime,  
 As candles near the fire their substance yield, 90  
 So stood I tearless, sighless, for a time,  
 While yet they sang whose praise ascends on high,  
 Following th' eternal spheres in ceaseless chime.  
 But when I heard in their sweet melody  
 How me they pitied, more than if they said, 95  
 "Why, lady, dost thou thus his spirit try ?"

<sup>70</sup> The queen-like severity of Beatrice reminds us of the words of *Conv.* iii. 15, in which Dante speaks of Philosophy as appearing to him at first as proud and disdainful, perhaps also of *Eccl.* iv. 17. The question reminds us of *Matt.* iii. 7. Had the penitent counted the cost of his pilgrimage ? Was he prepared for the final discipline without which it would fail of its purpose ?

<sup>74</sup> The question implies that the work of purification was as yet incomplete. The pilgrim is cleansed from the seven *peccata*, the concrete forms of sin, but there is yet a root-sin which has to be confessed and removed before conscience is at peace.

<sup>78</sup> Lethe is not yet Lethe to the pilgrim. The river reflects him to himself in all his shame and confusion. Line 70 prevents another of the pictures of child-life which are among the social beauties of the *Commedia*. Who has not felt that even in a mother's pity there is a bitterness of reproof ?

<sup>84</sup> The limit which the angels reach is suggestive. Dante has reached the "large room," the *locus spatiosus* of *P.* xxxi. 9. The angels will not go further into the passionate complaint that follows, for they mean the psalm to be, as Dante had felt it to be, a psalm of consolation. To him it is an appeal to Beatrice to have compassion on the penitent, and tears come to his relief. The psalm occurs in the *Rom. Brev.* in the Matins for Tuesday. Line 93 is obviously an allusion to Plato's thought of the music of the spheres (*Cic. Somn. Scip.* c. 5).

<sup>88</sup> The landscape scene, such as may have been seen from Perugia or Assisi, takes its place side by side with that of *H.* xxiv. 1-15 for completeness and beauty.

The ice that all around my heart was laid  
 Passed into wind and water, and with pain,  
 Through mouth and eyes from breast its issue made  
 She on the aforesaid margin of the wain 100  
 Still standing, to those creatures ever blest  
 Then turned her speech, and then I heard the strain  
 "Ye in the day eternal know no rest,  
 So that nor night nor sleep from you can steal  
 One step upon the world's great path imprest, 105  
 Therefore my answer greater care must seal,  
 That he may hear me well who there doth weep,  
 And so a grief to guilt proportioned feel  
 Not only as the wheels majestic sweep  
 That guide each seed to its appointed end, 110  
 According as the stars their concert keep,  
 But through the bounteous graces God doth send,  
 Which have such lofty vapours for their rain,  
 No mortal can his glance so far extend,  
 He, when his new life he did first attain, 115  
 Potentially was such that every good  
 In him had power a wondrous height to gain  
 But all the more perverse, and wild, and rude  
 Becomes the soil, with ill seed, left untilld,  
 As 'tis with more of natural strength endued 120  
 Awhile my face was strong his life to build,  
 And I, unveiling to him my young eyes,  
 In the straight path to lead him on was skilled

100 *A p l gives de tra*, "the right hand margin," but *detra* which I have adopted, seems way preferable. There is no adequate reason for assuming a change of position since 101.

103 The phrase comes probably from the *des alternantes* of a Pet in 18. The thought is that the angels rest not night nor day, that, as in the teaching of Aquinas (*Summa* 1. 17. 1) they know all things, past, present, future, not as men know them, through the senses, but by direct act of the intellect.

106 The lines count up all the influences which had contributed to endow Dante with the promise and potency of good. These were (1) those of the spheres and the stars which move in them, as in *II* xv 55, *l'or sau r'iz* (2) the graces of the "puri" spirits, if he had been allowed to ripen them might have developed into his best excellence. As in the title of the book so named, so here also we hesitate between the two possible meanings of *l'eta nuova*, as the epoch of a new era in Dante's life, or as simply - youth. I incline in both cases to the former.

118 The thought is that of the familiar *corruptio optimi pessima*, perhaps drawn of *I Job* vi 8 and *Isai* v 1-5.

121 Commentators as usual group these lines into two ranks, (1) taking the words, that follow as referring to the living personal Beatrice, (2) as having absolutely no reference to her, but indicating only (a) the orthodoxy of Dante's early faith and the purity of his youthful life, or (b) his early initiation into some Ghibelline or Minichian association. At the risk of trying to unite what might seem two incompatible theories, I adopt both (1) and (2a).

So soon as I had reached the point where lies  
 Our second age, and I my life had changed, 125  
 Me he forsook, and chose another prize.  
 And when I had from flesh to spirit ranged,  
 And loveliness and virtue in me grew,  
 I was to him loss dear and more estranged  
 His feet he turned to way that was not true, 130  
 Following of good the semblance counterfeit,  
 Which ne'er to promise gives fulfilment due  
 Nought it availed the Spirit to entreat,  
 Wherewith, in visions oft and otherwise,  
 I called him back, but little heed to meet 135  
 So low he fell, that ways, however wise,  
 Were all too feeble found his soul to save,  
 Save showing him the lost ones' miseries  
 For this I trod the gateways of the grave,  
 And unto him who thus far was his guide, 140  
 Tho prayers were borne which with my tears I gave  
 The sovran will of God would be defied  
 If Letho should be passed, and such a food  
 He tasted, yet no reckoning be supplied  
 Of penitence that pours its tears in flood 145

From the first the living Beatrice even as a child had roused the boy Dante to the consciousness of a higher life possible through wisdom. When in mature life he followed the wise of heart of all ages in taking woman's beauty as the symbol of that wisdom (*Purg vii* *Il ved iv* *Facilis li Plato Symp*, Boethius) no other face than hers came before him in his vision. Her eyes were something more than demonstrations (*Cont iii* 15). He could not look on them or recall them without higher intuitions than those of which he had been once conscious.

125 The second age begins at twenty five (*Cont iv* 24) and Beatrice died or rather changed her life in 1290 (June 9th) precisely at the threshold of this age. The efforts of the allegorists to bring the death of the imperial Beatrice into their scheme are a curiosity of literature but—

*'Non ragioniam di lei, ma guarda e passa'*

Following the clue which I have taken I see in his giving himself to others both his wandering affections and his erratic speculations: the *Donna Gentile* of *l. V* and a philosophy which beginning with Boethius passed on to Averroes and tended to Materialism or Pantheism. These form the first two stages of what has been called the 'Trilogy' of Dante's life (comp. Witte *D* i 1 141-182 on the *l. vii* of *Danti*, *l. vii*). Even Dante's marriage, the result not of spontaneous affection but of the pressure of the advice of friends, may have seemed to him as he looked back on it to have been an unfaithfulness both to the truth and to his personal embodiment. In his studies, in his convivial hours with *l. orse* (*C xxiii* 115) in his brief life in his political ambitions he had been following false images of good.

134 The fact stated is a striking revelation of Dante's inner life. His visions of the night were haunted by Milton's way by the form of his second wife by the ideal beauty of the Beatrice whom he had lost. He awoke but only to descend to the lower level of his daily life or it may be lower still. A whole volume of experience is wrapt up in the word 'otherwise' which though it may include waking visions as distinct from dreams, can scarcely be confined to them. Comp. *Purg C* 40 4.

139 The words remind us of *Purg lxxiii* 17. The only effectual safeguard against walking with the scornful and the sensual was to show the wanderer the end of these men, of the sensual the heretics the unbelievers. The verses epitomize the history of *H* ii.

145 Something more is needed for the absolute clearness and peace of which Lethe is the

## CANTO XXXI

*The sharp Agony of Repentance—The Baptism of Lethe—The new Companion—The Gryphon as the Bread of Heaven*

"O THOU who art beyond the sacred stream,"  
 Turning her utterance then point-blank to me,  
 Which even edgewise keen and sharp did seem,  
 She then began again immediately,  
 "Say, say if this be true, with charge so great  
 Thine own confession should commingled be"  
 So crushed was I beneath that burden's weight,  
 That my voice moved, and yet all broken fled,  
 Ere from its organs speech was separate.  
 Awhile she bore it, then, "What think'st thou?" and,  
 "Answer me now, for those thy memories sad  
 Are by the stream not yet extinguished"  
 Confusion and dismay together bade  
 A "Yes" from out my lips in such wise flow,  
 That to hear it sight's help must needs be had  
 Even like an arbalest, when string and bow  
 Are over-trained, and with full force no more  
 The arrow to its destined mark doth go,  
 So I gave way beneath that burden sore,  
 Pouring full flood of many tears and sighs,  
 And my voice failed ere half its course was o'er  
 Whence she to me "Why didst thou not arise  
 To my desires, that thou should'st love the Good,  
 Beyond which nought that men aspire to hes,

symbol than any confession of single fact, its classification under certain heads. The repentance is completed only when, in *Purg. viii*, the penitent goes to the *fons et origo* of the whole, the departure from his first love, human and divine, through which he lost his purity and peace.

<sup>1</sup> The reproaches of *C. xxx* 103-115 had been indirect, spoken to the angel, though at Dante. Now Beatrice's voice is like that of Nathan, "*Thou art the man*."

<sup>12</sup> The pilgrim had not yet passed through Lethe, and the old sins of sense and spirit might well therefore be recalled.

<sup>13-15</sup> The picture of shame and confusion of face has scarcely a parallel in literature, save in the Seven Penitential Psalms, of which Dante's penitence is more or less the embodiment. The feeble "yes," given in the movement of the lips rather than heard, is all that at first finds utterance. Was Dante transferring to the shores of Lethe the feeling which he had known in the confessional, at Rome or elsewhere, under the hands of some expert priest, skilled in the discipline of souls?

<sup>20</sup> The natural interpretation of the words that follow is simple enough. The personal Beatrice reproves the man who had loved her for having, after her death, proved faithless to

What pits that lay across, what chains withstood, 23  
 So that thy hope of passing farther on  
 Thou shouldst have laid aside in reckless mood?  
 And what allurements or what vantage shone  
 Upon the brow of others to thine eye,  
 So that thy steps to seek for them were won?" 30  
 Then, after I had drawn one bitter sigh,  
 Scarce had I voice wherewith to answer her,  
 And my lips struggled hard to make reply  
 Weeping I said, "The things that present were  
 With their false pleasure led my steps aside 35  
 Soon as thy face was hidden from me there"  
 And she "Hadst thou been silent or denied  
 What thou confessest, not less known had been  
 Thy guilt from such a Judge thou canst not hide  
 But when a man's own mouth is open seen 40  
 Himself of sin accusing, then the wheel  
 In our court turns against the sword-edge keen

her memory and transferred his affection to others. The non-natural interpretation of the allegorists, which finds in Beatrice only the symbol of Theology in the abstract, reproaching her votary for having turned aside to secular studies, is encumbered with the difficulty of defining what is meant by the death of Theology. An example of what might have been, had he acted otherwise, is found in the life of one who seems so far removed from Dante that it is hard for us at first to realize the thought that there was any parallelism between them. Few writers can be more contrasted with each other than the authors of the *Commedia* and of the *Morning and Evening Hymns*, and yet, as I read the life of Ken, and especially his *Funeral Sermon on Lady Margaret Maynard*, the thought comes into my mind that he too had had in his vision of a Beatrice, whom he loved as a guide and teacher, with no touch of sensual passion, and whose influence was strong to purify and ennoble his whole life. And when she died she became to him as one who had never "known any in but that of ignorance or infirmity," and who had passed to "the bosom of her Heavenly Bridegroom, where, how radiant her crown is, how ecstatic her joy, how high exalted she is in degree of glory, is impossible to be described." By a curious coincidence, he too turns to the *Veni, sponsa de Libano*, to the "Bridegroom's garden, where, when the south wind blows, the several spices and gums, the spikenard and the cinnamon, the frankincense and the myrrh," blend their fragrance, as a parable of the excellences of the "gracious woman" whom he honours (Ken, *170th Works*, ed. 1838, p. 124).

<sup>23</sup> The Highest God is none other than God Himself. *Conv. II* in 18, and *Conv. II* 8, in 22. To this Dante, under Beatrice's influence, had for a time aspired, but his first love waxed cold.

<sup>30</sup> The MSS. vary between *altre* = other goods or desires, and *altre*, other women. The former seems preferable.

<sup>34</sup> The confession of the solitary "yes" is expanded. The penitent had been misled by counterfeit shows of good (C. xxx. 131). The loss of Beatrice's presence had turned him to them for consolation. He turns to the heavenly life for that of earth. The "gentle lady" of *P. N.* c. 36, may have been, as many think, one such comforter (*Conv.* II 2). In *Conv.* II 16 he identifies that "gentle lady," perhaps in an over subtle afterthought, with Philosophy, but there is no tone of penitence or shame. Are we, as some have thought, to see in his confession here a recantation of the language of the *Canz.* in acknowledgment that he had loved Wisdom not wisely but too well, or to refer the wanderings that he now speaks of to aberrations of another kind? Of the two, I incline to the latter view, but both may be combined.

<sup>41</sup> Beatrice proclaims the laws of pardon in the court of Heaven (*P.* xxxi. 5, *Prov.* xxxii. 13, 1 *John.* 1. 9).

Howe'er this be, that thou more shame mayst feel  
 For that thine error, and in other years,  
 Hearing the Sirens, more thine heart mayst steel, 45  
 Last thou, and cease awhile to sow in tears,  
 So learn thou how, though buried in the tomb,  
 I should have led thee up the heavenly stairs  
 Never to thee did such full rapture come  
 From art or nature, as from that fair frame 50  
 I dwelt in, for which now earth finds a home,  
 And if to thee through my departure came  
 The loss of highest joy, what mortal thing  
 Should then have stirred thee with hot passion's flame?  
 By the first stroke that did experience bring 55  
 Of earth's false shows, thou shouldst have upward striven  
 Thy flight to me, no longer such, to wing.  
 Ill was it when thy pinions down were driven  
 To wait new wounds,—some gulf of little price,  
 Or other vain thing, for but brief use given 60  
 The callow lurd makes trial twice or thrice,  
 But all in vain the net is spread, or dart  
 Shot from the bow before the fledged one's eyes"  
 As little children, dumb with shame's keen smart,  
 Will listening stand with eyes upon the ground, 65  
 Owning their faults with penitential heart,  
 So then stood I, and she said, "Since 'tis found  
 So hard for thee to listen, lift thy beard,  
 In seeing shall thy pain yet more abound"

<sup>45</sup> The Sirens are identified, as in C. xix 19 *Par* xi 8 with sensual pleasure. They would scarcely be fit symbols of the canon or civil law, or of Aristotelian philosophy as contrasted with the Theology which the allegorists identify with Beatrice.

<sup>55</sup> Even the earthly beauty in which Dante had found a symbol and a witness of the highest beatitude had proved to be perishable, and the fact that it proved so should have led him to seek the things that are above.

<sup>60</sup> The *pargoletta*, or "girl of little price," has been identified, according to men's wanderings of thought, (1) with the *Donna Gentile* of the *I' N* c. 36, (2) with Gemma Donati, Dante's wife, (3) with the *Gentucca* of C. xx v 37, (4) with the secular wisdom which took the place of Theology in Dante's studies. It does not seem to me probable that he would have used so contemptuous a term in reference to (1) or (2). (3) is excluded by the fact that Beatrice speaks in 1300 of the past, and that *Gentucca* was then a child. (4) belongs to a theory which, so far as it denies the personality of Beatrice, I have throughout rejected. I incline accordingly to the belief that the words refer to some passing wanderings of desire in the interval between Beatrice's death and Dante's marriage, those wanderings synchronising, it may be, with mental aberrations.

<sup>61</sup> *Comp. Prov* i 17. Line 64 gives another of the studies of child-life which we have so often noted (C. xxx 79).

<sup>66</sup> Curiously enough the beard is wanting in all portraits of Dante. The Bargello portrait gives almost the smoothness of youth. The plaster cast taken after death is nearly as



With less resistance is a stout holm cleared 70  
 From out the soil by wind from our clime sent,  
 Or land where great Iarbas was revered,  
 Than I my chin at her command upbent,  
 And when she said "thy beard" instead of "face,"  
 I knew the barbed sting of her argument. 75  
 And as my face I lifted up a space,  
 Mine eyes then saw those primal creatures blest  
 Had ceased to scatter flowers all o'er the place  
 And then those orbs, their fear still manifest,  
 Saw Beatrice to the Creature turn 80  
 Which Natures twain in Person one possessed.  
 Beneath her veil beyond the river's bourne  
 She seemed to me her old self to excel,  
 More than, when here, all others ever born  
 So did the sting of penitence impel, 85  
 That of all else, what most had drawn me on  
 To love it, now I loathed as foe most fell  
 And such self-knowledge preyed my heart upon,  
 That I fell conquered, and what I was then  
 She knows who gave the first occasion 90

smooth To wear a beard seems to have been the exception rather than the rule in the latter half of the 13th century, yet the words here clearly imply that he wore one in A.D. 1300. So also ran the common speech of those who said, "See the man who has been in Hell, how his hair and beard are scorched!" See the curious dissertation on this point by Scarnelli (*Barba probabile di Dante Alighieri*, Bologna, 1874). The point of the word is, of course, that he could not plead youth as an excuse. He was twenty-five when Beatrice died, thirty-five when she lay bare before him the record of the ten years that lay between. Bocc (*V. D.*) speaks of his beard as an indication of his grief and general neglect of conventionalities on Beatrice's death.

71 Most MSS give "our clime" (*nostral vento*) but it seems a curious way of describing the North for an Italian. Possibly Dante wrote after a long experience of a cold spring in the Apennines. The reading *austral* has little to recommend it. But ingeniously suggests *maestral*, i.e. the *mistral*, or master-wind. The land of Iarbas, king of Libya, and son of Ammon (*Eu. iv. 196*), points to the south wind.

78 The scattering was that of the flowers in C. xxx. 20

81 The definite use of the dogmatic language of the Church's faith fixes the meaning of the Gryphon, and unless we assume Dante to have been a "*hérétique en délire*" writing under a mask, excludes every other interpretation. The fact that Beatrice turns to the Gryphon represents the truth that the Wisdom which she represents, contemplating the Divine Nature, rests at last in the mystery of the Incarnation. So the *Comm.* ascribed to the poet's son Pietro. In that contemplation she glowed with a new beauty that surpassed the old.

83 A *v. l.* gives *verde* instead of *vincer*,—"beyond the river's green hourns"—probably a correction to avoid the repetition of *vincer*. Writ. conjectures "*che vincesse*" in l. 84, and this I have followed. The vision of the supreme beauty of holiness completes the conversion. All lower shows of good vanish in its presence. Now therefore is the time for Lethe, and Matilda is at hand, the type of active, cheering sympathy—hardly, with *scari*, of the absolving work of the priesthood, any more than Beatrice is the type of the Pope's infallibility—to lead him safely through the river.

Then, when my heart new outward strength did gain,  
 The lady fair, whom I had found alone,  
 Near me I saw, saying, "Hold me, hold," again.  
 Up to the throat within the river thrown,  
 She drew me on behind her, while she went, 95  
 As though a shuttle o'er the stream had flown,  
 And as my way to that blest shore I went,  
 "Asperges me" I heard so sweetly sung,  
 I cannot it in thought or words present  
 And then her arms the beauteous lady flung 100  
 Around my head, and plunged me in the tide,  
 So that the water flowed down o'er my tongue;  
 Thence me she drew, and led me, purified,  
 Within the dance of that quaternion bright,  
 And each embraced me in her arms oped wide. 105  
 "Here we are nymphs, in Heaven are stars of light,  
 Ere Beatrice trod earth's lower ways,  
 We were her handmaids by God's order right;  
 We to her eyes will lead thee, but to gaze  
 Upon the joyous light within, the three 110  
 Whose glance goes deeper must thy vision raise"  
 Thus singing they began, and then led me,  
 With them conjoined, towards the Gryphon's breast,  
 Where Beatrice turned to us we see.

95 "Shuttle" answers to Ital *spola* *V II* give *stola* = a garment, or *scolis*, said to be an old Venetian word for "gendola"

98 *Asperges me* (*P's* li 9) entered into the ritual of Confession, and was said when the priest sprinkled the penitent with holy water. Dante may have heard it so sung, or, it may be, sung as an anthem

99 Memory can reproduce the sweetest music of earth, such as Cavell's (*C* ii 113), but that of Paradise escapes it

101 The immersion of the body symbolized the purification of the senses and the active life; that of the head and the swallowing of the water the cleansing of thought and memory, the "inward part" (*P's* li 6, *Heb* x 22) of man's nature

106 The four nymphs who embrace the pilgrim are, as in *C* xxx 130, the cardinal virtues. Augustine (*Ep* 52) had given a precedent for so describing them. But their ministry is not limited to man's life on earth. They belong to the eternal order, and are, as in *C* i 23 27, stars in heaven. *Comp Par* xxi 26 for a like combination

107 Have the words any point of contact with the personal Beatrice, or only with the mystical representative of Divine Wisdom? I answer the first question in the affirmative. Dante held the doctrine of the creation of souls, of their gifts and graces as being endowments from God (*C* xvi 85-90, xxv 70-76)

111 The three are the Christian graces, Faith, Hope, Charity (*C* xxix 120) which, in their supernatural power, lead to a fuller knowledge of God than the natural virtues (*Conv* iii 14, 15)

112 Dante is in harmony with the profoundest thoughts of all masters of the spiritual life. The highest outcome of the work of virtue, grace, wisdom is that they lead the soul to Christ

They said, "Take heed thou giv'st thine eyes no rest ; 115  
     Before those emeralds thee we now have set  
     Whence Love against thee drew his weapons blest "  
 A thousand longings, hotter than e'er yet  
     Was flame, mine eyes to those clear bright eyes drew,  
     Whose steadfast gazing still the Gryphon met. 120  
 As the sun's image in a glass we view,  
     So was that twy-formed Creature beaming seen,  
     Now with these looks, now those, reflected true  
 Think, Reader, what my wonder must have been,  
     When I beheld the object changeless stand, 125  
     Yet in its image changed in form and mien,  
 While, full of joy, yet slow to understand,  
     My soul its hunger fed with nourishment  
     Which satisfies, yet stimulates, demand  
 Showing in every act their high descent, 130  
     The other three moved on to harmonies  
     With their angelic dancing in consent  
 "Turn, Beatrice, turn thy holy eyes,"  
     So ran their song, "to this thy servant true,  
     Who to see thee hath dared such high emprise 135  
 For grace' sake grant this grace, to yield to view  
     Thy face to him, that he may well discern,  
     What thou dost hide, thy second beauty new

116 Modern taste would have chosen "sapphires" rather than emeralds, but the thought that there is a beauty in a gem like greenness of eye is not peculiar to Dante. Comp. Shakesp. *Romeo and Juliet* iv. 5, "An eagle hath not so green an eye" or a quotation from Swinburne's *Isidore* in *N. Q.* 6th Ser., i. 506—

"Those eyes, the greenest of things blue,  
 The bluest of things grey"

See also letters in *N. Q.*, 6th Ser. i. 81, 506

118 The fire of love follows as the completion of the work of the fire that burns away the dross, and the Incarnate Word is the object of that love

122 The thought is that of the "manifold," the "very varied" wisdom of God (*I ph.* iii. 30). The central truth remains one and indivisible, but it has many aspects, and the soul that looks on the face of wisdom sees there the glory of the Christ. The hymn of Clem. Al. *Prologus ad fin.* may be referred to as an illustration. A hundred parables and types float before the mind's eye, but Christ, one and the same, is "all in all."

129 The thought may have come either from *Ecclus.* xlii. 29 or from Greg. M. *Hom.* 16, "*Saturitas appetitum parit*."

132 The word for "dance" (*carzbo*) deserves a passing note, (1) as found here only, (2) as probably derived from Corybas, and so pointing to a mystic orgiastic dance like that of the Corybantes. Some, however, take it as = *garbo* = comeliness or grace

138 The "second beauty" is at once the transfigured glory of the personal Beatrice and the glory of the Divine Wisdom, which Dante had hitherto seen as through a veil, and now gazes on face to face.

O splendour of the living light eterno !  
 Who is there that beneath Parnassus' shade 140  
 Hath paled, or quenched his thirst from its fresh burn,  
 And would not seem to have his mind down-weighed,  
 Seeking what thou appearedst to make known,  
 O'ershadowed by the heavens that music made,  
 When to the open air thy form was shown ? 145

### CANTO XXXII

*The full Vision of the glorified Beatrice—The Tree of Knowledge—The Ascension of the Grapheon—The sacred Chariot and its wondrous History*

No eager were mine eyes, and so attent  
 My ten years' craving thirst to satisfy,  
 That every other senso was lost and spent,  
 Beyond, like walls that bounded either eye,  
 Reigned simple nescience, so that sweet smile lent 5  
 To the old net resistless mastery  
 And when perforce my face awhile was bent  
 Towards the left by those Divine Ones fair,  
 For that I heard them say, " Ah, too intent ! "  
 And as clear vision fails before the glare, 10  
 In eyes but lately smitten by the sun,  
 So for a while nought saw I anywhere  
 But when my sight a little strength re-won—  
 I say " a little " with the " much " compared  
 Of that bright glory I was forced to shun— 15  
 I saw that to the right hand had repaired  
 That glorious army, and had wheeled full round,  
 So that their face the sun and seven flames shared

<sup>2</sup> The *P. N.* fixes the date of Beatrice's death as June 9, 1292. Here there is absolutely no standing room for the theory that Beatrice = Ihekuly. The "old net" is that of the beauty which had, as in the *P. N.*, taken him in its meshes and held him fast.

<sup>3</sup> Even the contemplation of Divine Wisdom may become exhausting for one who is yet in the flesh. The ecstasy of the beatific vision requires the immortal eye. For mortals the excess of light brings darkness, and they need to recover from it and return to the things of earth. The comparison implies perhaps a reminiscence of Dante's personal experience of weak and inflamed eyes (*P. N.* c. 40, *Conv.* iii. 6).

<sup>4</sup> The chariot procession had come from the east, like "the dayspring from on high" (*Luke* i. 78). It now turns back, looking to the sun, and with the seven candlestick in front. We

As 'neath its shields, for due protection found,  
 A cohort with its flag doth wheel and move, 20  
 Ere the whole force its march about hath wound,  
 That army of Heaven's kingdom high above,  
 Which led the way, had all before us passed,  
 Ere the car's pole its power to turn did prove  
 Then to the wheels those ladies turned at last, 25  
 And then the Gryphon moved his blessed load,  
 Yet so that not one feather shook through haste  
 The lady fair who through the ford me towed,  
 Statius and I, we tracked the wheel's path well,  
 Whose orbit marked with smaller arc the road 30  
 So, passing the high forest, where none dwell,  
 Through fault of her who did the serpent trust,  
 Angelic music with our footsteps fell  
 Perchance an arrow from the bow would just  
 In three flights such a distance reach as we 35  
 Our march, when Beatrice stepped down, had thrust  
 "Alas," I heard them all speak murmuringly .  
 Then they a tree encompassed stript and bare,  
 No flower or leaf on any bough to see ,  
 Its topmost branches, wide-spread everywhere, 40  
 The more it rises, would from Indians gain  
 In their woods wonder for its stature rare  
 "O Gryphon ! blest art thou who dost refrain  
 Thy beak from that same branch, to taste so sweet,  
 Since thence man's inward parts felt torturing pain." 46

154 what does the retreat mean? It is like the departure of Astraea, the vanishing of an ideal, the symbol of the decline and fall of the Church left in the world from its primal glory and completeness. The calmness of the movement (l. 27) seems to indicate the truth that as long as the Church was guided by Christ there was no disorder or confusion in it.

20 Matilda and Statius, *muta persona* from the time of his entry on the earthly Paradise, follow the chariot on its right side, i.e., in company with the three supernatural graces, Faith, Hope, and Love.

31 The earthly Paradise is void and without inhabitant through the primal sin of Eve.

37 The reproaches remind us of Milton's "For this we may thank Adam" (*P. L.* x. 736). The tree round which the procession halts is primarily that of the knowledge of good and evil (*C.* xiv. 116, xxxiii. 58), but it becomes, in Dante's manifold interpretation, the symbol also of earthly wisdom and earthly polity, as the tree of life is that of heavenly wisdom and the heavenly kingdom, and therefore of the Roman Empire and Church, as the embodiment of both. It stands in both its aspects stript and bare, but its branches sweep far and wide as the symbol of the Universal Monarchy. For a like imagery comp. *Ezek.* xxxi. 1-7. The reference to "Indians" comes from *Geog.* ii. 122-124, but may also include reminiscences of what had been heard from Marco Polo or other travellers.

44 The Christ had, as in the Temptation, resisted the allurements to which Adam had yielded. He would not yield to those of sense. He would not grasp the glory of the kingdoms of the world (*Matt.* iv. 1-11. *Luke.* iv. 1-13).

Thus round the strong tree, all in order meet,  
 The others cried, and that twy-natured One,  
 "Thus is the seed of all right kept complete"  
 And turning to the pole which he drew on,  
 He brought it close below that wilowed stem,  
 And left there bound what was indeed its own  
 And as the plants we know, when falls on them  
 The sun's great light with other radiance blent,  
 Which booms behind the Fishes' starry gem,  
 First swell and bud, and then with ornament,  
 Each of its special tint, are quick renewed,  
 Ere the sun's steeds to other stars are bent,  
 Less than the rose yet more than violet-hued  
 Unfolding, then that new growth did girth,  
 Whose branches erst so bare and naked showed  
 I never heard, nor ever here such strain  
 As that they sang is heard by mortal ear,  
 Nor could I all its melody sustain  
 If I could paint how ruthless eyes and clear  
 Were lulled to sleep with Syrinx' tender lay,  
 Those eyes to which much watching cost so dear,  
 As artist, who with model paints away,  
 Then would I picture how asleep I fell  
 Let him try who can slumber well port ay

<sup>46</sup> The voice of the Christ confirms the beatitude just uttered. All righteousness is found in self denial, i.e., not eating of the forbidden fruit.

<sup>48</sup> We enter into yet another, the historical, side of the symbolism. Christ leaves His Church to the care of earthly wisdom as embodied in the Roman Empire. The thought worked out in *Mon.* ii. 2-12 is embodied in the single triplet.

<sup>51</sup> The astronomical description points to the season of Pisces (*Lascia - ranch*) in *ARIUS* in the Zodiac, that is, to spring, when what had seemed dry and withered begins to bud and burgeon.

<sup>58</sup> The colour can scarcely be other than symbolic. The new foliage of the tree - "*miratunqu, novus fons*." (*Cery* ii. 82) - is not green, but of the hue which represents the fact that the blood of Christ and the blood of martyrs give a new vitality to the tree of human wisdom and earthly empire, which had seemed so dead.

<sup>64</sup> The "ruthless eyes" are those of Argus who sat to watch over Io who lulled to sleep by Mercury as he told the tale of the loves of Pan and Syrinx and was then slain by him (*Idyll* i. 508, 747).

<sup>67</sup> We note the similitude as appropriate in the artist who had learnt to paint from the life (*V. N. c. 35*). The deep sleep which falls on Dante's soul prepares the way for another apocalyptic vision which takes the place of that which he has seen vanish. It is, it will be seen, of a very different character, telling not of the ideal glory of the Kingdom, but of its earthly vicissitudes. I shall endeavour to deal with this as I have done with its forerunner, giving what seems to me the true interpretation, and not bewildering myself or the reader with wanderings in the labyrinthine mazes of expositors.

Therefore to pass to when I woke 'tis well, 70  
 And say that then a brightness rent the veil  
 Of sleep, and loud cry, "Rise! what dost thou? tell!"  
 As once of old the apple-blossoms pale,  
 Which with their fruit the angels satiate  
 In Heaven, in wedding-feast perpetual, 75  
 James, Peter, John were led to contemplate,  
 And by them dazzled, at the voice returned  
 By which was broken deeper slumber's state,  
 And emptied saw the school in which they learned,  
 As of Elias, so of Moses too, 80  
 And then their Master's altered garb discerned,  
 So I revived, and near me came in view  
 That holy lady who my guide had been  
 My path along the river to pursue  
 "Where then is Beatrice?" asked I, keen 85  
 With eager doubt, and she - "Lo! on the ground  
 'Neath the fresh leaves she on the root doth lean  
 See there the company that gird her round,  
 The rest the Gryphon follow now on high,  
 With melody more sweet and more profound." 90  
 And whether she more fully made reply  
 I know not, for there came before my gaze  
 She who all power to hear more did deny  
 Alone she sat, on ground, of Truth the base,  
 Left there as guardian of the mystic car, 95  
 Which He bound there who twy-formed nature sways  
 Then formed a ring, by movement circular,  
 Those seven fair nymphs with torches in their hand,  
 Which safe from Aquilo and Auster are

<sup>73</sup> The transfiguration is described as being to the full glory of the Christ what the apple blossom is to its fruit. That fruit, *sc.*, the glory of the Man God, is the delight of the angels, and belongs, as the fruit of the tree of life, to the marriage-supper of the King. As the three disciples were when the vision left them, so was Dante when he awoke from his deep sleep. He turns to Matilda as his early friend, and as the type of sympathy and hope (C. xxviii. 40), and asks what it all means—"Where is Beatrice?" He is bidden to look once more. The Christ, and the saints who represent the books of the Old and New Testaments, and the angels, are gone, but she, Divine Wisdom, is still there, left together with the natural and supernatural virtues as the guardian of the Church.

<sup>74</sup> The *terra vera* of the Italian seemed to require a paraphrase. I take it as indicating the local Rome as the appointed centre of the life at once of the Empire and of the Church (*Mon. u. passim*, II. ii. 23). There the tree grows, thither the chariot is brought. The other view, that we should translate "on the bare ground," as indicating the lowliness of Beatrice = Theology = Spiritual Religion, scarcely needs discussion. Comp. C. xiii. 95, xvi. 96.

<sup>75</sup> The lights in the hands of the Nymphs are obviously the several graces, to which their

"Here a short while thou shalt as woodman stand,  
 And with me shalt for aye be citizen  
 Of that Rome where Christ heads the Roman band.  
 Therefore, for good of evil-living men,  
 Look on the chariot, and what there thou see'st,  
 When thou to earth returnest, write thou then " 100  
 So Beatrice, and I, who to the least  
 Of her commandments gave my homage due,  
 Turned eyes and mind to follow her behest  
 Never did fire from cloud its course pursue  
 So swiftly downward 'mid the pelting shower, 110  
 From the high sphere remotest from our view,  
 As I then saw the bird of Jove pass o'er  
 Down on the tree its very bark to break,  
 Rending the flowers and tender leaves yet more,  
 And that fierce blow did all the chariot shake, 115  
 So that it reeled, like ship in sore distress,  
 Where, starboard, larboard, waves their onset make  
 Then saw I how a vixen in did press,  
 Inside that great triumphant vehicle,  
 Which, ravenous, seemed no good food to possess 120  
 But, chiding it for its sins horrible,  
 My Lady turned it to such lusty flight,  
 As through its fleshless bones was possible

names answer, manifested in life, possibly also the sevenfold gifts of the Spirit as alluded to with those graces.

100 "Here" is defined by the "*terra vera*" of l. 94. It is the earthly Roman Empire, embracing all Italian life. Dante, at the assumed date of the vision, had still 40 years before him of life in that region. But he would find himself there in a forest, not in a house, if not in a forest like that of *Il t. 1-3*, yet in that which was so different from the true Rome as the earthly Jerusalem was from the heavenly. In that Rome the Rome where God is Emperor, and Christ, as man, is citizen Dante should be, with his transfigured Beatrice, the sharer in an endless life (*C. xiii. 96*). I note without comment the chief other interpretation: "When thou diest thou shalt be but a short time in Purgatory, and shalt then pass at once from the earthly to the heavenly Paradise."

104 It is after Dante's manner to give, after the pattern of Daniel, Ezekiel, and St. John, these rapid surveys of history. See the allegory of the "grand old form of Cicero" (*Il. xiv. 203-220*), and the Roman eagle in *Par. vi. 37-111*. Such surveys furnished ideas which might avail for the reformation of the world.

112 The bird of Jove is with Dante (*Par. vi. 1*) the received symbol of Roman power, as to Ezekiel (*xvii. 1, 4*) it had been of Nebuchadnezzar. It has made its nest in the tree as the type of civil order. It attacks the chariot and injures the tree's foliage. The Emperors persecute the Church, and in so doing bring loss of strength upon the empire.

116 The symbolism was so current that it needs no explanation, but it may be worth noting that in 1300, the assumed date of the vision, Giotto, in Rome, probably with Dante, was painting his famous picture of the *Navicella* for St. Peter's (*L. p. ix. 5*).

119 The vixen, the fox bitch, is the representative of the heresies, pre-eminently the Arian, which harassed the Church when the persecutions ceased. Those heretics had ceased to feed on the true food of the Church's life, the doctrine of the Scriptures, and they were driven forth by the wisdom, symbolised by Beatrice, of the great Doctors of the Church.



Then, by the way whence first it came to sight,  
 I saw the eagle to the car descend, 127  
 And leave it feathered with its plumage light.  
 As from a heart that bitter grief doth rend,  
 So came a voice from Heaven, and thus it cried  
 "Ah, bark of mine! what ill freight thee doth bend?"  
 Then the earth seemed to me to open wide, 130  
 And 'twixt the wheels a dragon did I see,  
 Who pierced with upward tail the chariot's side,  
 And, like a wasp with sting drawn back, did lie,  
 Coiling the whole length of his evil tail,  
 Wrench out the floor and vanish tortuously 137  
 That which remained behind, as fertile vale  
 Is clothed with grass, was soon with plumage clad,  
 Offered, perchance, with mind where did not fail  
 Pure thoughts and good; and lo! that vesture had  
 Covered both pole and wheels in briefer span 140  
 Than sigh keeps open lips of one that's sad  
 The holy structure, thus transformed, began

<sup>125</sup> The eagle clothing the chariot with its own feathers answers to the fabulous Donation of Constantine, in which Dante, though in *Mon.* iii. 10 he had defended it with apologetic limitations, came to see (*H.* xix. 115) the starting point of the later corruptions of the Church. The ship was thus, as the voice (Christ's or Peter's?) proclaims, overlaid with its freight of worldly possessions. Witte mentions a legend that at the time of the Donation a voice was heard from heaven, "*Hodie diffusum est venenum in Ecclesia Dei*."

<sup>136</sup> The dragon indicates a new peril which ended in a schism. Historically it may represent the iconoclastic quarrel which divided the Eastern from the Western Church, or the aggressive conquests of Mahomet, who, as in *H.* xxviii. 31, is regarded as the greatest of all schismatics, but the dragon is probably to be taken, as in *Rev.* xii. 3, xiii. 2, as the symbol of the Devil, as the great enemy and divider, working through all human schismatics.

<sup>137</sup> The temporal power and wealth increased, and appropriated more and more of what had been the riches and prerogative of the Empire bestowed by Pepin and Charlemagne, as Dante admits, with good intention, but with disastrous results. The very wheels of the chariot were clothed with the eagle's feathers. Bishops, clergy, monastic orders were all enriched, to their own detriment and that of their people, and all this came as by leaps and bounds, with a quickness which aggravated the evil.

<sup>140</sup> The seven head, with their ten horns are clearly based upon the vision of the beast in *Rev.* xiii. 1, but the symbolism is somewhat obscure, all the more so as in *H.* xix. 109 (where see note) the head and the horns had appeared as belonging to the primitive and uncorrupted Church. The general drift of commentators tends to seeing in them the vices that are opposed to the seven virtues, or the seven gifts of the Spirit, the sins that are transgressions of the ten commandments, as the consequence of the Church's wealth, but this does not explain why three of the heads have two horns each and the others only one, and generally is scarcely satisfactory. I fear I must say the same of the ingenious conjecture (*Bulter*) that the heads represent the seven electors of the Empire as originally nominated by the Pope in virtue of his temporal power, the three heads with two horns answering to the three archbishop electors (Mayence, Treves, and Cologne), and the others to the four secular princes. At the risk of adding another conjecture to the limbo of vanities I suggest (1) that the four single-horned heads may stand for the four mendicant orders (Dominicans, Franciscans, Carmelites, and Augustinians), which were recognised by Gregory X. in the Council of Lyons in A.D. 1272, (2) that the three with two horns may represent either the three grades of the priesthood, or more probably the three more powerful monastic orders, Benedictines, Carthusians, and Cistercians. All these, from Dante's standpoint (*Par.* xi. 124-139, xxi. 129-142, xxii. 74-84), were corrupted by their wealth. This interpretation has at least the

To thrust forth heads from out each separate part,  
 Threes at the pole, one where each angle ran.  
 With horns like oxen, lo! the three did start, 145  
 But for the four, one horn in front was found,  
 Such monster ne'er hath met man's eye or heart  
 Firm as a rock upon high mountain ground,  
 I saw a harlot sit at easo thereon,  
 Shameless, with wanton eyes that glanced around 150  
 And that his prize might not from him be won,  
 I saw a giant there, who stood erect,  
 And many a kiss each gave the other one,  
 But when her lustful, wandering eyes direct  
 On me she turned, forthwith her lover rude 155  
 Scourged her from head to foot as one suspect,  
 Then, full of jealous doubt and wrathful mood,  
 He loosed the monstrous form, and through the glads  
 Dragged it, until I found in that same wood  
 Shield from that harlot and this beast new made. 160

ment of harmonising with the symbolism of *Par. xii* 106 for the four orders who divided Western Christendom between them, almost every city assigning to them its Black Friars or its White Friars, see the *Creed of Piers Plowman*.

148-160 The closing scene of the vision is somewhat easier to interpret. There is a consensus of interpreters that the harlot is the Curia Romana impersonated in Boniface VIII, that the giant lover is Philip le Bel of France, that the blows which he inflicts on her represent the outrage of Anagni (C. xx 86), that the dragging of the chariot through the woods answers to the Babylonian captivity of the Popes at Avignon. There are two points which remain obscure are (1) the mutual embraces of the giant and the harlot, which seem at variance with the long conflict between Philip and Boniface, (2) the glance at Dante which turned those embraces into jealousy and suspicion. The explanation is, however, not far to seek. There was a time, and it was precisely that of the date of the vision in 1300, the year of Jubilee, when the Pope and the King were for a time reconciled. Boniface had been accepted as arbitrator between Philip and Edward I. France sent her pilgrims and her offerings to Rome. In inviting Charles of Valois to act as pacificator of Italy and tempt him with the crown of Sicily, Boniface appeared to be leaning on a French alliance against the Empire. In Milman's language (*L. C.* vii 88), "The embers of that fatal controversy between the king of France and Boniface, which were hereafter to blaze up in such ruinous conflagration were smouldering unregarded and to an seeming utterly extinguished. Philip, the brother of Charles of Valois, might appear the dearest and most obedient son of the Church." Nor is the solution of the other problem far to seek. We need not suppose, as some commentators have done, that Dante means by himself the Italian people or the King of Christendom, or the Ghibelline party as such. When the contest broke out again, Dante's sympathies (C. xx 86-90) were with the Pope against Philip. Boniface, with warm professions of friendship, recognised Albert of Austria as Emperor dismissed his French supporters, and fell back on the Italians. It is probable enough that Dante, who mixed so freely and took so prominent a share in the political movements of the time, may have had some part in determining the new tendencies, probable also that he magnified the part, and persuaded himself that Philip's jealousy was the result of his influence with the Pope. The two last lines may, I conceive, point to the fact that Dante had found a shelter for a time in the very fire—the kingdom of France—to which the chariot had been dragged. See *Lyt.* c vii.

## CANTO XXXIII

*Beatrice—The Interpreter of the Vision—The fourfold River of Paradise—  
Eunoe and the New Birth*

"*Deus, venerunt gentes*," thus in strain  
 Alternate, three and four, sweet psalmody,  
 The ladies then began to weep amain,  
 And Beatrice, breathing many a sigh  
 And sad, in such wise listening stood, that she 5  
 With Mary's pallor at the Cross might vie  
 But when the other virgins left her free  
 To speak, then standing up, aloud cried she,  
 And answer made, all fiery-red to see  
 "*Modicum, et non videbitis me* 10  
*Et iterum* Ah! listen, sisters dear.  
*Modicum, et vos videbitis me*"  
 Then placing all the seven in front of her,  
 And, beckoning only, bade me next to move,  
 Me and the lady, and that poet-seer 15  
 So she passed on, nor deem I that above  
 Ten steps she onward went, ere with her eyes  
 She rested on mine own with light of love,  
 And with calm aspect, "Come more quickly," cries,  
 "So if it be my will to speak with thee, 20  
 Thou mayst be near to hear what I advise"

1-15 *Ps. lxxix*, which occurs in the Matins of the *Rom. Brev.* for Thursday, and of which we have the first words, adapted itself naturally to the evils of the time with which the last Canto had ended. The outrage of Anagni, the persecution of the Templars, the lawlessness that prevailed in Rome as the "widowed city" might all be read in between the lines of the great huge psalm. As the first renewed the scene of Calvary (C. xx. 87), so Beatrice becomes as the *Mater dolorosa*, or Lady of Sorrows, weeping by the Cross. But she rises from her sorrow with the glow of righteous anger, and has a word of hope, such as had comforted the disciples of the Christ. Wisdom and truth seemed to have left the world for a time, but after a "little while" they would be seen again, and the tyranny would be overpast (*John* xvi. 16-22).

16 Statius is still with Dante and Matilda, possibly as representing the element of culture which suffered in the sufferings of the Church, and sympathized with them (C. xxii. 86).

17 The ten steps are probably, as a certain for an uncertain number, the symbol of the "little while" of which Beatrice had spoken, or possibly may point to the interval between the election of Clement V. in 1305 and 1314, when Dante was expecting the triumph of Henry VII., and with it the restoration of the Church to Rome. As being a perfect number, it represented a period fixed by Divine appointment (*Conv.* ii. 15).

And when I drew nigh, as was meet for me,  
 She said, "My brother, wherefore art not bold  
 To question, now thou hast my company?"  
 And as with those whom too much awe doth hold, 25  
 Who, when they speak to men of greater might,  
 Scarce from their teeth their living speech unfold,  
 So chanced it with me that my voice aight  
 I scarce could frame "Dear lady, what I seek  
 Thou knowest, and what best may give me light." 30  
 Then she to me "From shame and shinking weak  
 I wish thee now thyself to extricate,  
 So that no more as dreamer thou mayst speak.  
 Know that the car the serpent broke of late  
 Was and is not, let him that's guilty know 35  
 God's vengeance fears no sop that bars its hate  
 The eagle shall not always hairless go,  
 That to the chariot left his plumed wings,  
 Whence it a monster, then a prey did grow.  
 Surely I see, and sight true utterance brings, 40  
 The stars already near the appointed hour,  
 And knowing not delays nor hinderings,  
 When the Five Hundred, Five, and Ten, with power  
 As sent from God, shall slay that harlot vile,  
 And with her, too, her giant paramour 45

<sup>25</sup> Beatrice addresses Dante in the same terms as Matilda (C. xxix. 15). The lover has become the brother.

<sup>31</sup> The fear and trembling of *H.* ii. 34-39, which Dante feels to be, as it were, his besetting infirmity, are with him at the sight of the new evils that were coming on the Church as they had been at the beginning of his pilgrimage.

<sup>35</sup> The words are an echo of *Rev.* xvii. 9, but with a widely different application. The car which the dragon had rent asunder, the visible Church of Christ, was for a time among the things of the past. The Church at Avignon was but a counterfeit mockery of that of Rome, but vengeance should fall on him who had wrought the evil.

<sup>39</sup> The words imply a singular Italian superstition. It was believed that if a murderer, within eight days of the death of his victim ate a morsel of bread or meat over his grave, he would escape all punishment. During those days, accordingly, the friends of the murdered man kept strict watch over the grave (*Par.* i. 535). Corso Donati was said to have acted on this belief (*Bocc.* in *Amor.* p. 84).

<sup>41</sup> Dante looked on Frederick II. (*Conv.* iv. 3) as the last true Emperor, Rodolph, Adolph, and Albert never came to Italy, and were therefore only nominally kings of the Romans (C. vi. 60-105). The question whether the words point (1) to Henry of Luxemburg as the destined heir, or (2) to some yet future successor, depends on the date we assign to the composition of this Canto. I incline to (1), but admit that some passages in the *Purgatory* may be of later date than the death of Henry (1314).

<sup>45</sup> As a student of the Apocalypse (*Rev.* xiii. 18) reproducing its forms, Dante also has a mystic number. In the Roman numerals for 135 (DXXX) he finds the promise of a hero-reformer who shall be the minister of Divine justice. On the assumption of the earlier date of the *Purgatory*, Henry of Luxemburg, of whom Dante speaks in his epistles as almost a

Perchance my speech, obscure and dark awhile,  
 As Sphinx or Themis, may persuade thee less,  
 Because, like them, it clouds the mind awhile  
 But soon events shall be the Naiades,  
 Who shall the great enigma make full clear, 50  
 Nor dearth nor murrain on our nation press  
 Note this, and just as thou my words dost hear,  
 So teach thou them to those who live, yet lead  
 A life which unto death doth swiftly bear  
 And when thou writest, take thou then good heed 55  
 Not to conceal that thou the plant hast seen  
 Which now twice o'er hath felt the plunderer's greed  
 He who despoils or plunders it, I ween,  
 Offends his God in blasphemy of fact,  
 Who for His own use made it pure and clean 60  
 For biting that, five thousand years exact,  
 Or more, the first soul paid of longing pain,  
 For Him who on Himself avenged the act

new Mesurh (*Fiat O M* iii 464-474), presents himself as the promised DUX. On that of the later we have to turn to the prince round whom Dante's hopes crystallised after Henry's death, Can Grande of Verona (the "Greyhound," probably of H. i 101), who was recognised as the leader of the Imperial party in 1318. The language of *Par* xvi 76-93 shows how high were the hopes which the poet had formed of him. One writer has found in the initials of his name giving a numerical value to each letter of the Italian alphabet analogous to that which is familiar to us in Greek, though not identical with it (Can Grande della Scala, *Signore de' Fiorentini*) the number 515. The conjecture (*Bull*) that the number gives the years between the revival of the Western Empire in Charlemagne (799) and the election of Louis of Bavaria (1314) is hardly I think tenable in spite of the fact that the latter year witnessed the deaths of Philip the Fair and Clement V. What Dante gives is obviously the "number of a man, not the duration of a period. The slaughter of the harlot and her lovers means of course not the death of an individual Pope or King but the triumph of the ideal Emperor, or other "Messenger of God, over the alliance of the Papal Curia and the House of Valois.

<sup>47</sup> Another *Quadrin* reminiscence. The oracles of Themis were sought by Deucalion and Pyrrha after the deluge, and she answered in dark sayings (*Met* i 347-415). The Sphinx and the Naiades point to the story of Oedipus, but the latter name rises out of a curious misreading. The true reading of *Met* vii 759 is—

"Carmina Latades non intellecta prorum  
Solvebat ingenium."

where Latades = son of Laus = Oedipus, but the MSS. of Ovid for the most part gave the reading *Naiades* and *Solvent* and Dante accepted the reading and assumed that the *Naiades* also were prophetesses, as indeed, with less excuse, not a few commentators have done after him, and compiles them with the facts which will make the mysterious prediction plain. Themis, in Ovid, sends a blight on the crops and a murrain on the cattle (*Met* vii 763-765).

<sup>48</sup> The tree is the forbidden tree or the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*C* xxxii 87), but it is also the polity of the theocratic Empire with which the Church had been united. That had been twice spoken—once as in the scriptural history of Adam—once by the giant, *se*, by the kings of the House of Valois. To attack the true ideal empire, the divinely appointed order for the government of man, is an acted blasphemy (*Non* ii 10).

<sup>49</sup> In what sense, we ask, was Adam's sin like that of Philip the Fair? The parallel seems to us far fetched, but from Dante's standpoint there was in each case the root sin of disobedience to a Divine commandment. The chronology deserves a passing notice. In *Par* xxvi 119 the years of Adam's life are given from *Gen* v 5 as 930, those between his death and

Thy spirit slumbers if it see not plain  
 That for some great cause it was raised so high, 65  
 And in its summit so transformed again,  
 And, if the vain thoughts of thy mental eye  
 Had not become to thee as Elsa's spring,  
 Their joy, as Pyramus at the mulberry,  
 Such facts alone to thee would knowledge bring 70  
 Of the deep moral meaning of the tree,  
 And show God just in His prohibiting.  
 But since thy understanding shows to me  
 As turned to stone and petrified in hue,  
 So that my speech's brightness dazzles thee, 75  
 I will that, though unwrit, yet painted true,  
 Thou carry back what now is in thy mind  
 As pilgrims, palm in hand, their way pursue"  
 And I "As wax that with the seal is signed,  
 Which changeth not the figure there imprest, 80  
 Thy signet on my brain is well defined

the descent into Hades as 4302, giving 5235 in all. Uecher's reckoning, with which we are familiar, would give 4036, but Dante, with most mediaeval scholars, followed the computation of Eusebius. Brunetto Latini (*Trer* 1 42) reckons 4254 years from the creation to the birth of Christ.

65 The growth of the tree is explained. The ideal empire expands as it grows, and its top most branches are the widest spread.

68 Elsa is a tributary of the Arno, rising near Siena. Its waters are calcareous and rapidly deposit a crust of carbonate of lime on objects immersed in them. So had Dante's vain thoughts encrusted and obscured his clearer vision. Even after the disci, line of Purgatory and the water of Lethe, spiritual discernment still needed growth. He was waiting for the waters of Eunoe.

69 Was the comparison suggested by the rhyme, or was the story, already referred to (*C* xxvii 37-39), growing in the poet's mind into an allegory? Pyramus had stained the mulberry with his blood (*Met* iv 55-166), Dante had stained the whiteness of his soul with earthly and sensual thoughts (*I* 74).

73 The "moral" meaning is to be taken in its strictest sense as the third of the four senses in which Scripture might be interpreted. The tree might have, besides a literal, an allegorical, and an anagogic or mystic meaning (*Conv* ii 2, *Ep* to *C* c 7). The moral meaning is that man is shut out from the fruit of the tree of knowledge, of the highest wisdom, till his soul is purified for its reception.

76 The poet's *apologia* for his dark sayings. He cannot write as he would: he can only report what he has seen and heard, as showing where he had been.

78 The palm branch which the pilgrim bore round his staff was to prove that he had been at the Holy Sepulchre and was entitled to his pardon or indulgence. So the ground enclosed by the cloisters of Wells Cathedral was known in the 13th and 14th centuries at once as the Palm and the Pardon churchyard, from the station at which pilgrims deposited the former and received the latter.

79 What the potter's wheel was to Jeremiah (*xviii* 2-10), that the figure of the wax and seal was to Dante (*C* x 45, *Conv* i 8, ii 20, *Mon* ii 2). There is perhaps a point of contact with his medical studies in his making the brain the special organ of the mind, the *communis sensorium*, which receives and combines the impressions conveyed through the senses.

But why so far beyond my vision rest  
 Thy words that fill my soul with such desire,  
 That more is lost the more the search is prest?<sup>85</sup>  
 "That thou mayst know," she said, "how stands that school  
 Which thou hast followed, and its doctrines scan,  
 And learn how far it follows my true rule,  
 And see how far apart from God's thy plan,—  
 As far as is from earth that highest sphere  
 Whose movements swiftest, widest circle span" 90  
 And then I answered "Memory writes not here  
 That I have ere estranged myself from thee,  
 Nor doth my conscience wake remorseful fear"  
 "Nay, if thou failest so in memory,"  
 She answered, smiling, "call thou this to mind, 95  
 How that this day thy Lethe-draught was free,  
 And as in smoke the proof of fire we find,  
 Thus thy oblivion proveth all too well  
 Guilt in thy will to other things inclined.  
 Henceforth my words in very deed shall tell 100  
 The naked truth, as far as, in thy case,  
 'Tis meet thy rude gaze on their beauties dwell"  
 Brighter at once and slower in its pace,  
 The sun was holding the meridian,  
 Which shifts or here or there with change of place, 105

<sup>85</sup> The scholar half complains that the words of his mistress are *yet* too hard for him. A conjectural emendation gives, *disaiata* = out of the common track, for *disiata* desired, but the text seems preferable.

<sup>86</sup> The "school" which Dante had for a time followed was that of a philosophy which was not Christian, which, beginning with Boethius and Cicero, passed on to Aristotle as expounded by Averroës (*Con.* ii. 13). Through Aquinas, probably also through St. Bernard and Hugh and Richard of St. Victor, he had learnt a truer system. The teaching of Beatrice led him to a mystical theology which was higher even than the dogmatic theology of Aquinas.

<sup>88-90</sup> A reminiscence of 1 Cor. ii. 14 and Isai. lv. 8, 9. The "highest sphere" is the *Primum Mobile*, endowed, in the Ptolemaic system, with a rapidity of movement beyond all others.

<sup>91</sup> There is a touch almost of humour both in the defence and the reproof. Dante had drunk of Lethe, and thus explained his unconsciousness of offence, but Lethe implied previous transgressions, and those transgressions had left their impress, not as yet effaced, in a lack of spiritual discernment.

<sup>100</sup> Were the words of *John* xvi. 25 floating in Dante's memory?

<sup>102</sup> The words point literally to the fact that it was noonday in spring, when the day lengthens, and the apparent motion of the sun is therefore slower. Line 105 points to the fact that every place on the earth has, according to its longitude, its own meridian. Below the surface there is probably the thought that the Sun of Divine Truth is now seen by him in greater brightness and yet more gradually revealed to him than before, and perhaps also that the aspect of that Truth varies with the standpoint of the observer.

When the seven ladies halted full in sight,  
 As halteth one who goes in front as guide,  
 If on some object strange his glances light,  
 Just on a dim dark shadow's border-side,  
 Shade such as, with swarth boughs and foliage green, 110  
 O'er their cold streams the Alps throw far and wide  
 Euphrates, Tigris, both in front were seen.  
 Their course I seemed from one clear fount to trace,  
 Like dear friends, slow to leave a space between.  
 "O light, O glory of the human race!" 115  
 What stream is this that from one source doth bear  
 Two streams, and from itself doth flow apace?"  
 And to my quest came answer, "Let thy prayer  
 Matilda ask to tell thee," and reply  
 Came, as of one who from blame sets him clear, 120  
 From that fair lady's lips "These things have I,  
 And much else, told him, and full clear I see  
 That Lethe hath not hid them from his eye."  
 And Beatrice "Deeper cares, may be,  
 Which often Memory of her strength deprive, 125  
 Have clouded o'er his mental vision free.  
 But see, Eunoe's waters hence derive,  
 Lead him to them, and, as thou'rt wont to do,  
 Once more his half dead energy revive."

104-111 Beatrice and her seven handmaids move on to the bank of another river Eunoe, overshadowed I with thick trees. Have we another reminiscence of Vallombrosa (C xxviii 25) or Campaldino? (H xxii 4) or more recent memories of Switzerland or Mont Cenis?

112 The description is taken partly from Gen ii 10-14 but the flowing of Euphrates and Tigris (Hilfikel) as distinguished from Pison and Gihon from one source, may have been derived from *Isaiah* v 1—*Tigris et Euphrates uno se fonte resolvunt*.

115 The words are an echo of H ii 76-78. There however the words seem to apply more to the personal habit to the transfigurement and mystic Beatrice.

119 We note that this is the first and last time that Dante's guide and companion is named. So, it will be remembered, it had been with his own name (C xxx 55) she pleads that her task is already done (C xxviii 43 146).

124 What were the greater cares? The mysteries of the apocalyptic visions of C xxxi, xxxii the adoring love of Beatrice, his own desire for Paradise—all these have been suggested, each, it may be, with some element of truth.

127 What was needed was a fresh baptism, not in the stream of oblivion of evil but in that which revived all memories of good, and cleared the vision of the soul to gather into one all the partial perceptions of truth and striving after holiness which had entered into the pilgrim's past life and to see that they have been wrought in God (*John* iii 21). In this work Matilda, the type of the cheerful and genial sympathy which is a potent element in the therapeutics of the soul, lends as before with Beatrice (C xxxi 100), a helping hand. In the description of her manner (*domesticamente*) I can scarcely help seeing a reminiscence of the fair blithe lady of the *P. N. c. 8* whom I have identified with Matilda. And what was done for him was done also for Statius the poet to whom he felt bound by the ties of a closer brotherhood, as in that communion of saints from which Virgil was excluded, that to any other.



As gentle soul whom ne'er excuse withdrew 130  
     From others' will, but takes it as its own,  
     Soon as 'tis patent made by token true,  
 Soon as my hands she clasped, that beauteous one  
     Moved on, and as a gracious lady spake  
     To Statius, saying, "With him come thou on." 135  
 Could I, O reader, wider limits take  
     For writing, I might hope to sing in part  
     Of that sweet drink which ne'er my thirst could slake,  
 But since I've filled each corner of my chart,  
     To this my second cantique given as due, 140  
     My course is checked by bridle of my art  
 I from that stream that holy is and true  
     Returned refreshed, as tender flowerets are  
     Revived and freshened with a foliage new,  
 Pure and made meet to mount where shines each star. 145

<sup>137</sup> There is a certain abruptness in the close of the *Purgatory* for which this is the excuse. The poet is writing according to a fixed plan. He cannot allow himself more than thirty three cantos, the canto may not much exceed 150 lines. All that he can say is, as once before, *Incipit Vita Nova* (*V N c 1*) There is a new birth, a new springtide in his life. New thoughts bud and blossom. The time has come when he can not only see the star, as in *H xxxiv 130*, but mount up to them, so passing from the earthly to the heavenly Paradise. Measured by the notes of outward time, he has been twenty four hours in Hell, four days and nights on the Mountain of Purgatory.

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